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PAGE 70

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Spaghetti  
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PAGE 36

America's  
Greatest  
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PAGE 76

All About  
**SHRIMP**

PAGE 40



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# SAVEUR



40

## COVER

A Louisiana classic: shrimp boil.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

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## FEATURES

### MIGHTY SHRIMP

**40** They're our favorite seafood and a touchstone of American cooking. In this in-depth look at American wild-caught shrimp, we pay tribute to that succulent, versatile crustacean and follow its journey from ocean to table.



56

### ANCIENT HUNGER

**56** The remarkable cuisine, native foods, and kitchen tools of a pre-Inca civilization live on in the kitchens of northern Peru.

BY MARICEL E. PRESILLA

### THE GLORY OF RED COOKING

**70** A time-honored Chinese cooking technique produces rich, fragrant dishes designed to warm diners through and through.

BY GRACE YOUNG

### SWEET LIFE

**76** At his pâtisserie and bake-shop in upstate New York, Michael London takes classic French pastries and European-style breads to new heights.

BY DARRA GOLDSTEIN

76





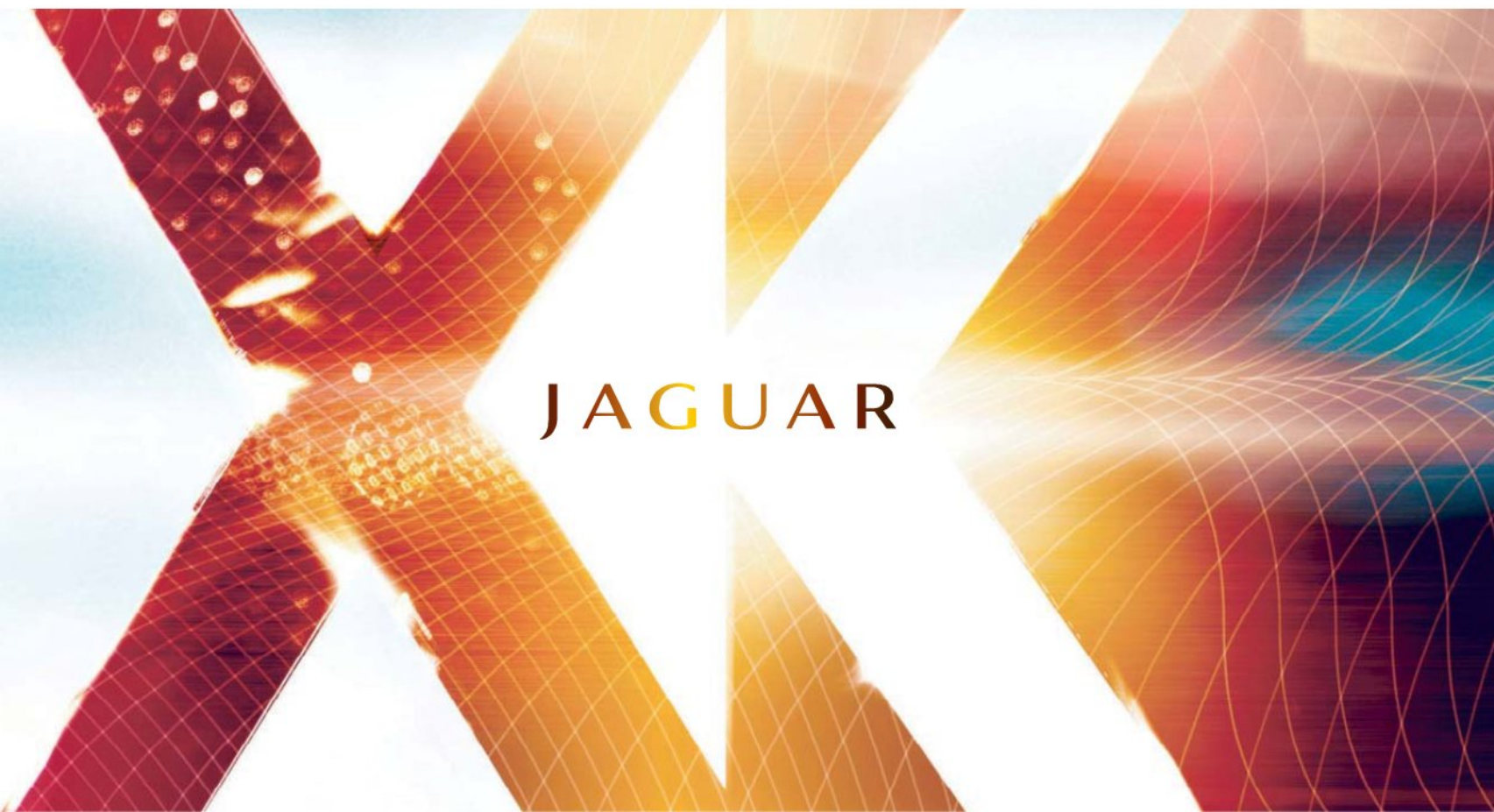






IR

ALL NEW



JAGUAR



## CONTENTS



26



36



86

## DEPARTMENTS

14

**FIRST** Recipes aren't mere inventories of ingredients and cooking methods; they're gateways into the soul of a dish.

BY JAMES OSELAND

19

**SAVEUR FARE** Mumbai's drink vendors; sansho peppers; hungry mushers in Alaska; a *SAVEUR* milestone; plus Agenda and more.

22

**BOOK REVIEW** Life and food become art in a chronicle of kitchens.

25

**SAVEUR LIST** With monofloral honeys, sweetness is only part of the story.

BY SIERRA BURNETT

26

**KITCHENWISE** These days, former New York City mayor Ed Koch happily helms his Greenwich Village kitchen.

BY GEORGIA FREEDMAN

28

**CELLAR** Volnay produces silky, elegant red burgundies.

BY MICHAEL STEINBERGER

31

**MEMORIES** In a Myanmar prison, imagination sets appetites free.

BY MA THANEGI

35

**SOURCE** This Tennessee bacon is smokin'.

BY TODD COLEMAN

36

**CLASSIC** A Roman pasta dish delights even the most finicky eater.

BY MEI CHIN

86

**IN THE SAVEUR KITCHEN** The story of cocktail sauce; the secret to deveining shrimp;

a key ingredient in Chinese vegetarian cooking; pork belly; and more.

92

**THE PANTRY** How to find our favorite products and materials from this issue.

BY LIZ PEARSON

96

**SAVEUR MOMENT** An in-your-face encounter with a birthday cake.

PHOTO: HULTON-DEUTSCH COLLECTION/CORBIS

## RECIPES &amp; METHODS

## FARE

|                                                        |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Jal Jeera (Cumin-Laced Tamarind and Mint Cooler) ..... | 20 |
| Beet and Sumac Salad .....                             | 24 |

## MEMORIES

|                                                            |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Pei Daunt Shay Thoke (Myanmar-Style Long Bean Salad) ..... | 34 |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----|

## CLASSIC

|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Spaghetti alla Carbonara ..... | 36 |
|--------------------------------|----|

## SHRIMP

|                                        |    |
|----------------------------------------|----|
| Shrimp Scampi with Linguine .....      | 43 |
| Barbecued Shrimp .....                 | 44 |
| Shrimp Boil .....                      | 49 |
| Stir-Fried Shrimp with Snow Peas ..... | 50 |
| Shrimp Cocktail .....                  | 52 |
| Maine Shrimp Chowder .....             | 55 |

## PERU

|                                                   |    |
|---------------------------------------------------|----|
| Yuca Hervida (Boiled Yuca) .....                  | 58 |
| Sudado de Pescado (Huanchaco-Style Fish Stewed in |    |

|                            |    |
|----------------------------|----|
| Tomatoes and Chiles) ..... | 60 |
|----------------------------|----|

|                                                                |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Cebiche de Mero al Estilo de Huanchaco (Grouper Ceviche) ..... | 64 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----|

|                                                                              |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Salsa de Aji Escabeche y Paico (Andean Yellow Chile and Epazote Salsa) ..... | 65 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|

|                                                              |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Pepián de Garbanzos (Chickpea Porridge with Chile Oil) ..... | 67 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----|

## RED COOKING

|                                                 |    |
|-------------------------------------------------|----|
| Hong Shao Yu (Red-Cooked Fish) .....            | 72 |
| Si Xi Kaufu (Four Happiness Wheat Gluten) ..... | 72 |
| Hong Shao Rou (Red-Cooked Pork Belly) .....     | 75 |
| Hong Shao Ji (Red-Cooked Chicken) .....         | 75 |

## SARATOGA BAKER

|                           |    |
|---------------------------|----|
| Gâteau Saint-Honoré ..... | 78 |
| Lemon Meringue Tart ..... | 81 |
| Chocolate Babka .....     | 82 |

## KITCHEN

|                                               |    |
|-----------------------------------------------|----|
| Ed Koch's Broiled Swordfish with Olives ..... | 90 |
|-----------------------------------------------|----|

FOR AN INDEX OF RECIPES AND METHODS BY CATEGORY, SEE PAGE 91.



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# FIRST

## Tools of Our Trade

Gathering recipes is an act of both the intellect and the heart

**I** FIRST LEARNED TO COOK—I mean *really* cook, not just the occasional, cookbook-led forays into caesar salad that I indulged in as a teenager—in Indonesia, where I have traveled more than 20 times since the early 1980s. In that country, home cooking occurs most often in kitchens equipped with little more than a basic stove, a few mortars and pestles, and a cutting board or two. As prep work is generally done on the kitchen floor—by an ever-changing contingent of women that can consist at any given moment of grandmothers, mothers, daughters, aunts, cousins, and even neighbors—counter space is an uncommon luxury.

Back when I first came to know those places, I was disarmed not only by their simplicity but by the kind of cooking that took place within them. Contrary to the precise, almost formulaic actions (the measuring of ingredients, the timing of dishes) that were the norm in the suburban kitchen I had grown up in, the cooking in the Indonesian ones was casual, communal, fun, with everyone participating in a seemingly nonhierarchical way—aunties leaning over grandmas' shoulders to weigh in when a curry was done, older sisters dipping their fingers into spice pastes to test for salt. Where, I wondered, were the measuring spoons and scales?

I soon came to realize that what I was witnessing in those kitchens was an ancient craft,

one that had more to do with folklore, legacy, and hands-on experience than it did with, say, recipes clipped from the Wednesday food section. It was the real wisdom of cooking handed down the old-fashioned way, from grandmother to mother to daughter (and to anyone else, like me, who was lucky enough to be around). It also involved a liberal dose of what in Indonesia is called *agak-agak* (literally, somewhat-somewhat). The term refers to that joyful global tradition of cooking by instinct rather than careful

measurement. Still, I was hungry to know how to replicate all the foods I was watching being made, so I did what any sensible college-age American would do: I took copious notes, following them once I'd gotten home until I could take ownership of the technique of cooking a particular dish.

Out in the field, *SAVEUR* writers rely on similar methods of capturing recipes. Consulting editor Grace Young, who reported this month's article about Shanghaiese red cooking

("The Glory of Red Cooking", page 70) takes with her a portable scale and sound recorder, among other tools, when reporting stories. Maricel Presilla, author of "Ancient Hunger" (page 56), about northern Peru, keeps in mind her encyclopedic knowledge of Latin American cooking. But their goal is the same: to convey the most soulful—and authentic—possible interpretation of a recipe. After all, we want to make all those grandmothers out there proud. —JAMES OSELAND, Editor-in-Chief



Contributor Grace Young's research equipment.





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# FARE

Explorers and Experimenters from the World of Food, plus Book Review, Agenda, and More

## AGENDA

MARCH

5-17

### FESTIVAL INTERNACIONAL DE LA VENDIMIA

Ica, Peru

Residents of the Peruvian desert region of Ica toil diligently to coax grapevines from sandy soil. Every March, locals literally enjoy the fruits of their labors with a celebration that includes a Queen of the Wine Festival competition; the winner, with her handmaids in tow, has the honor of stomping the first grapes of the harvest. Join the festivities with a glass of pisco (Peruvian grape brandy), and dig into such traditional dishes as morusa (mashed butter beans with roast beef or pork) and tejas (a dessert made with figs, pecans, and caramel) while taking in the horse-riding competition and a parade of glittering floats. Information: 511/222-7999.

MARCH

8-25

### STARKBIERZEIT AT PAULANER AM NOCKHERBERG

Munich, Germany

Oktoberfest gets all the glory, but this festival—*Starkbierzeit* literally means strong-beer season—really holds its own. The main events of this monthlong affair, which draws celebrities and politicians as well as townspeople and tourists, kick off at the Paulaner am Nockherberg, the Paulaner Brewery's beer hall, named for the 17th-century monks who first brewed extra-strong dopelbock beer to fortify themselves during the Lenten season. The dopelbocks, which can weigh in at a hefty 7.5 percent alcohol, and seasonal wheat beers on offer around town taste even better with an order of pretzels and pigs' knuckles. Information: 49/89/23 39 65 00.

## Quenched, Indian Style

Mumbai's drink vendors shake it up



**T**HE INDIAN city of Mumbai (formerly Bombay) offers ample proof that the art of mixology hardly belongs solely to cocktail lounges. On the streets of this city of 17 million people, you won't find high-octane alcoholic drinks, but you will find a seemingly infinite array of original and delicious libations made with ingredients—from black salt and fennel seeds to intensely aromatic spices—that would leave most bartend-

ers wide-eyed with wonder. In Mumbai, vendors smash, chop, and shake up all sorts of things to make tongue-tingling drinks, beloved to connoisseurs of that city's street food, that transcend the Western boundary between sweet and savory.

"Whether it's music, fashion, food, or drink, Indians like to *desi* things up"—give them an Indian character—says former Mumbai resident Kaumudi Marathé, author of a forthcoming cookbook on the cuisine of

Maharashtra (the state in which Mumbai is located), to be published this year by Penguin Books India. "So, it's not uncommon to add familiar spices to lemonade or colas, or even to a glass of Tang at home."

Take the fountain soda, a beverage of lowly status in the West. In the hands of a drink wallah (vendor), standard-issue

**Mumbai street vendors, above, dole out gola (shaved-ice refreshments) to cool a thirsty clientele.**



MARCH

10

**MILK RIVER WAGON TRAIN  
NUT AND GUT FEED***Malta, Montana*

Every year the residents of this northern Montana town connect to their past by supping on the same kind of rustic victuals their pioneering forebears ate as they traveled alongside the Milk River in the 19th century. Attendees enjoy a meal consisting of typical cowboy fare like Rocky Mountain oysters (bull testicles), sweetbreads, and scout potatoes (sliced potatoes with ham and cheese sauce); afterward, there's live music and dancing. Information: 406/654-2678.

MARCH

11-12

**A TASTE OF THE HUON***Ranelagh, Tasmania*

The terrain of mountains, coast, river, and rain forest in the regions around the Huon Valley, in southern Tasmania, puts forth a culinary bounty. At this annual festival, more than 20,000 visitors taste tantalizing local favorites: tempura mushrooms, Bruny Island oysters, Tasmanian Atlantic salmon, smoked goat with peach relish, and Tasmanian pinot noir. Information: 61/401 925 439.



MARCH

12

Anniversary:

**FIRST PATENT FOR STARCH  
PROCESSING GRANTED***1841, United States*

Next time you pour thick gravy over your turkey or give in to a craving for instant pudding, offer a word of thanks to Orlando Jones. No, not the actor; we're talking about the Englishman who obtained a patent for an improved process of extracting, through maceration and milling, a powdery starch from rice. The method was soon applied to corn, and thus cornstarch, that indispensable thickening agent, (continued on page 24)

## FARE



cola syrup is destined for greatness with the addition of soda water, a squeeze of lime, and a pinch of chat masala, the hot and tangy spice mixture usually made with black salt, asafetida

## METHOD

**Jal Jeera***(Cumin-Laced Tamarind and Mint Cooler)*

*Jal jeera* in Hindi means cumin water. Amid the street-food carnival that is Mumbai, this sweet, sour, and spicy drink (left) provides cooling salvation for residents of the notoriously hot city. For a source for hard-to-find Indian ingredients, see *THE PANTRY*, page 92. Put 1/4 lb. tamarind pulp and 5 cups hot water into a bowl; let soak for 30 minutes, periodically mashing the tamarind with your fingers and freeing as much of the pulp as possible from the fiber and seeds. Working in batches, pour mixture into a strainer over a bowl. Press down on mixture until nothing but seeds and fiber are left in strainer. Discard solids. To strained liquid, add 2 tbsp. sugar, 1/2 tsp. toasted cumin seeds, 1 tsp. black salt, 1 tsp. fresh lime juice, 1/2 tsp. red chile powder, 1/8 tsp. garam masala, and 10 large fresh mint leaves; stir to combine. Purée in a blender until smooth. Strain through a fine sieve into a pitcher and chill. Serve over crushed ice. Makes 1 quart.

(an aromatic tree resin), dried-mango powder, and red chile powder. Jal jeera, an exquisite tamarind drink spiked with lime and sugar, is infused with cumin and mint and seasoned with

warming spices. And sharbats, cooling elixirs containing flower essences or fruit concentrate and a sugar syrup, are often tinged with cardamom. Gola wallahs, who make a concoction that

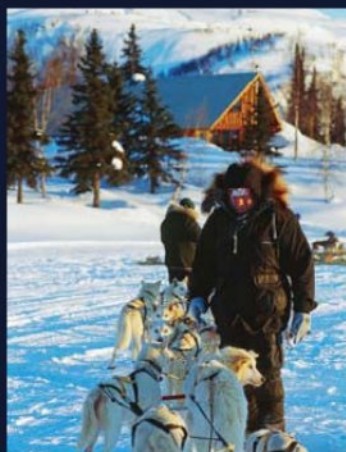
## Cold Comfort

A chef brings more than mere sustenance to the mushers of Alaska's Iditarod

**K**irsten Dixon, owner of the Winterlake Lodge, should have flown out a day earlier. Instead, she was standing around the office of Rust's Flying Service in Anchorage, Alaska, along with me, ten paying guests, and much of the food she was supposed to serve over the next three days: delicate lettuces, bright red bell peppers, organic chickens, and other fare you wouldn't expect to see in March this close to the Arctic Circle. The Winterlake Lodge, located 198 trail miles north of Anchorage and far off the state's road system, has a reputation for serving sophisticated cuisine, but these particular guests were hoping—if the weather permitted—to witness the lodge's preeminent distinction: it's located on the site of a checkpoint for the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, and it's the only stop along the 1,161-mile route where mushers get to enjoy a meal made by trained chefs. Dixon, who

decided to take cooking classes in Paris after a number of Europeans began to visit her first lodge, says the trick is in putting the lessons of classic French cuisine to work in a rustic kitchen. "We didn't have any running water for seven years," says Dixon. "But I learned that I could take simple ingredients

and still execute them in a thoughtful way." Soon, ham and mashed potatoes gave way to pan-seared duck breasts with tea and honey sauce and pad thai with Alaskan spot prawn. Back in Anchorage, a window of tranquil weather had opened up, and after a short ski-plane flight I arrived at the lodge, a collection of hand-built cabins. Early the next morning, the first of 82 sled teams arrived. Over the next 15 hours, the others followed; many of them bedded down their dogs and walked up to the lodge for a meal of chicken in an orange sauce served alongside rice and beans. Between mouthfuls, gossip flew, but the talk never strayed from the demanding task at hand. "All you're really concentrating on," race judge Mark Lindstrom told me, "is taking care of yourself and your dogs." Here, anyway, at Checkpoint No. 6, they could leave the cooking to someone else. —Jenna Schnuer



Hungry Iditarod competitors arriving at Alaska's Winterlake Lodge.



could be called a relative of the snow cone, add flavored syrup to shaved ice and chat masala, creating a slushy, icy refreshment that is at once cool, sweet, spicy, and sour. Gola's fancier cousin, malai gola, includes condensed milk and malai (cream), as well as crushed almonds.



"People who need to experience everything, even if only once, sooner or later fall into the temptation of bread making."

—ISABEL ALLENDE, *APHRODITE: A MEMOIR OF THE SENSES*

For many Mumbai denizens, the steamy months preceding the monsoon season would be unbearable without falooda, a combination of rose syrup, milk, ice cream, and, often, basil seeds and vermicelli-like wheat noodles. Badshah, a café located in the Fort neighborhood of South Mumbai, is the acknowledged temple of falooda, which is thought to have been introduced to India by Persian Muslims in the 14th century. Another hot-weather cooler is neera, a palm juice drink whose vendors crowd Mumbai's commuter train station platforms.

"The popularity of Mumbai's street drink vendors," says Marathé, "comes from a combination of a hot climate, a long workday, a tiring commute, and one heck of a thirst." But why so many different drink varieties? "We're a city of snackers," she says, "and we need something equally interesting to wash it all down." —*Litty Mathew*



## FIERY FRUIT

The tiny sansho pepper is a powerhouse of flavor

**S**ANSHO PEPPERS GIVE me a buzz. I discovered these addictive dried berries—a close relative of the sichuan peppers used in that Chinese province's pungent cuisine—in a condiment dish next to my chopsticks at a Tokyo restaurant. At first taste, the black peppercorn-size sansho delivered an intense, cleansing lemon-lime flavor accompanied by a faint piney scent, but after two or three sec-

onds, a numbing sensation kicked in and then lingered on the roof of my mouth and tongue.

I later learned that the ingredient, *Zanthoxylum piperitum*, isn't a member of the pepper family at all: the pinkish-brown pods are harvested from the prickly ash, a tree indigenous to the mountainous regions of Japan, North Korea, and parts of China. The pericarp, or fruit wall, of the berry contains alkylamides called sanshools that



## FARE

impart an anesthetic quality (hence the buzz), as well as resinous essential oils that produce citrus and geranium flavor notes.

In Japan, nearly every part of the prickly ash is used in cooking, including the bark, leaves, buds, flowers, and berries, whose dried hulls are often ground and served with eel or used in grilled dishes that require extra zest. The dried berries are also occasionally served whole—as when I first tasted them—to garnish a bowl of chicken hot pot, among other things. Like its Chinese counterpart (*Zanthoxylum simulans*), sansho also appears in conjunction with other spices—specifically, in seven-spice powder, the popular spice mixture known in Japan as shichimi togarashi. Served as a condiment, shichimi togarashi

is sprinkled over noodle soups and hot pots.

*Zanthoxylum piperitum* in its whole form remains hard to find in the United States; like its Sichuanese cousin it was banned until recently by the USDA because it was thought to host an insect that can carry a bacterium harmful to citrus trees. After my first experience, I trolled the food stalls outside Tokyo's Tsukiji fish market and, at one, found a large, vacuum-sealed pack of sansho peppers ready for export. I've recently managed to stop popping them into my mouth like beer nuts, but my fascination has hardly abated, and my stash is dwindling fast. (See THE PANTRY, page 92, for information on finding ground sansho peppers in the U.S.) —Shane Mitchell

## BOOK REVIEW

# Cook's Collage

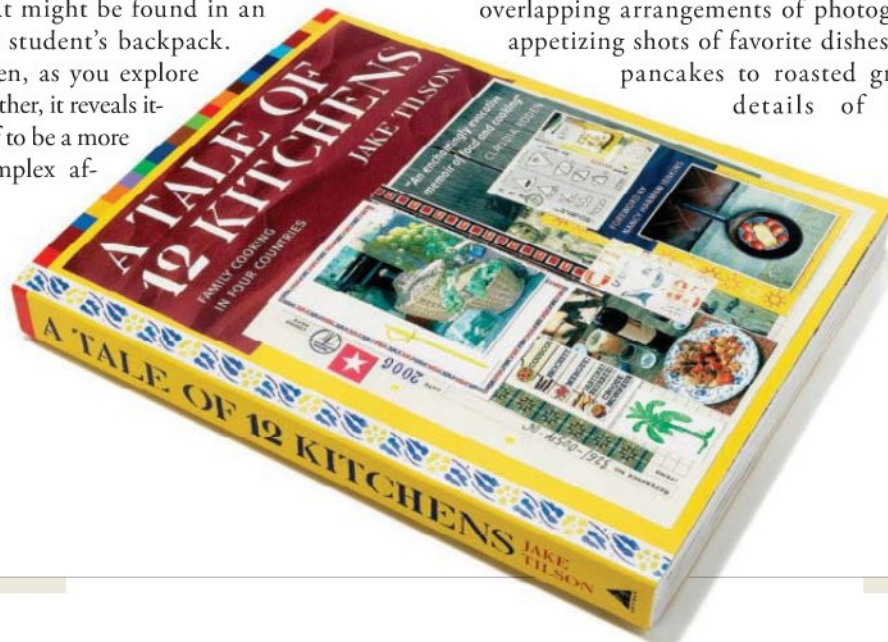
An artist transforms his culinary life into a book

BY TODD COLEMAN

**F**OOD AND FINE ART are no strangers; consider, for instance, Cézanne's still lifes of fruit or the Rabelaisian feasts depicted by British painter William Hogarth in his 18th-century engravings. Rarely, though, have the two come together in such an intensely personal way as in *A Tale of 12 Kitchens* by London-born artist and graphic designer Jake Tilson. At first glance, the tome seems like a colorful scrapbook—the type of journal that might be found in an art student's backpack. Then, as you explore further, it reveals itself to be a more complex af-

fair: a photo book, a memoir, and a cookbook all rolled into one vibrant package.

Cataloguing the events of his nomadic life, Tilson has chosen to reminisce by way of the kitchen, specifically those in homes he's inhabited over the years in London, Tuscany, New York, Los Angeles, and Scotland, among other locales. The result is a free-form narrative, replete with philosophical musings, recipes, sketches, and recollections of meals past, that weaves through overlapping arrangements of photographs: appetizing shots of favorite dishes (from pancakes to roasted grouse), details of labels



MICHAEL KRAUS

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## FARE

(continued from page 20) was made ready for the masses.

MARCH

29

Birthday:

**CHARLES SUTHERLAND ELTON**

1900, Withington, England

For most of us the idea of the food chain—colorfully illustrated in countless elementary-school textbooks—seems as old as Earth itself. But it wasn't until ecologist Charles Elton published *Animal Ecology*, in 1927, that the notion caught on. In the now classic book, Elton identified a pyramid-like pattern of food relationships. He left it to schoolteachers to make it all seem interesting.

MARCH

30–31

**NEWPORT PIG COOKIN' CONTEST**

Newport, North Carolina

Fancy a lazy afternoon of Southern barbecuing? Well, you picked the wrong town. At this spirited contest on North Carolina's central coast, competitors camp beside their grills, tending to their own 100-pound, split-down-the-middle pig, making sure the skin is crisp and the flesh tender. Six thousand plates of delicious North Carolina barbecue later, a winner is chosen. Information: 252/223-7447.



MARCH

31

**PUBLIC BAKE DAY**

Fort Gibson, Oklahoma

During the Indian Wars of the late 19th century, soldiers stationed at Fort Gibson in northeastern Oklahoma survived on bread baked in the garrison's large masonry oven. On this day bakers at the Fort Gibson Historic Site fire up the brick-and-sandstone hearth and bake bread the old-fashioned way. Visitors can bring their own dough and watch as it's baked. The old oven presents special challenges—there's no temperature dial, for one thing—but that hasn't prevented bakers from achieving success with Bavarian black bread, pinwheel rolls, and even store-bought dough. Information: 918/478-4088.

and food packaging (a flattened box of Thomas' english muffins, a jar of Gold's horseradish, a plastic tab used to crimp shut a bagged loaf of bread), and silhouetted pictures of unusual cooking implements (there's one of a trio of spurtles, rod-shaped stirring tools from Scotland), as well as rural and urban landscapes. Through this intermingling of words and images, Tilson examines the rituals and environments with which he's grown intimate over the years, whether it's cooking tortellini in brodo at his family's Tuscan farmhouse or making burritos in a hotel bathroom. The book's structure appears chaotic, but *A Tale of 12 Kitchens* ultimately establishes a graceful, calculated rhythm: each page is a vivid work of art unto itself.

The recipes, many of which are facsimiles of the actual stained, handwritten originals, are an idiosyncratic bunch. In one, Tilson describes his boiling a couple of ducks in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, eventually smothering them in "a deep bank of snow to cool rapidly". It's the first—and likely only—recipe readers will ever have seen that calls for worcestershire sauce and snow. Other dishes are far more makeable, such as a beet and sumac salad and a Polish hunter's stew of sauerkraut and sausages called bigos. Breezy, smart, and surprisingly unpretentious for such a personal undertaking, *A Tale of 12 Kitchens* is so rooted in Tilson's family lore that he likens

the publishing of it to "the selling of the family silver". Still, I imagine that Tilson, who is 48, has plenty of memories yet to make.

*A Tale of 12 Kitchens: Family Cooking in Four Countries* by Jake Tilson (Artisan, \$22.95).

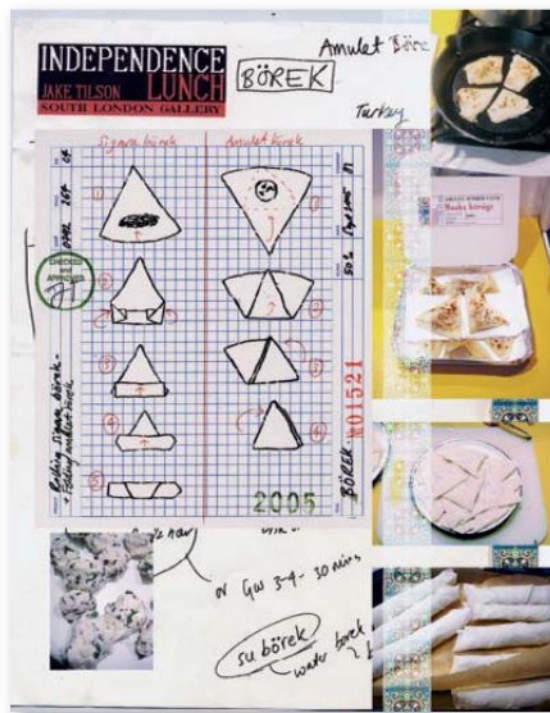


## METHOD

**Beet and Sumac Salad**

"[This] Middle Eastern winter salad with a creamy, nutty taste and a delicious bite of onions, flavored with sumac and lemon," writes Jake Tilson, "[is] a great addition to a mezze supper." Sumac, a purple-hued spice that's ground from the dried berries of the sumac tree, has a sour, almost astringent bite. It's used widely all over the eastern Mediterranean as a flavoring and souring agent, in such preparations as hummus and the ubiquitous sliced onions that accompany grilled meat dishes. Cook 3 unpeeled large beets in a large pan of gently boiling water until tender, 30–40 minutes. (Add a drop or two of red wine vinegar to help set the beets' color.) Drain the beets and let cool. Peel the beets, then cut them into quarters and thinly slice. Put the sliced beets, 2 tsp. ground sumac (see page 92), 2 handfuls arugula leaves, and 1 thinly sliced large red onion into a serving bowl. Mix 1 cup whole milk yogurt, 1–2 tbsp. lemon juice, 2 tsp. tahini, 2 crushed cloves garlic, and salt and pepper to taste in a bowl. Pour dressing over the salad and toss gently. Serve with a flat bread, such as lavash, and marinated olives, if you like. Serves 6.

A page, below, from *A Tale of 12 Kitchens*; above right, beet and sumac salad.







AFRICA  
ALASKA  
ASIA & PACIFIC  
AUSTRALIA  
NEW ZEALAND  
CANADA  
NEW ENGLAND  
CARIBBEAN  
EUROPE  
HAWAII  
MEXICO  
PANAMA CANAL  
SOUTH AMERICA  
WORLD VOYAGE



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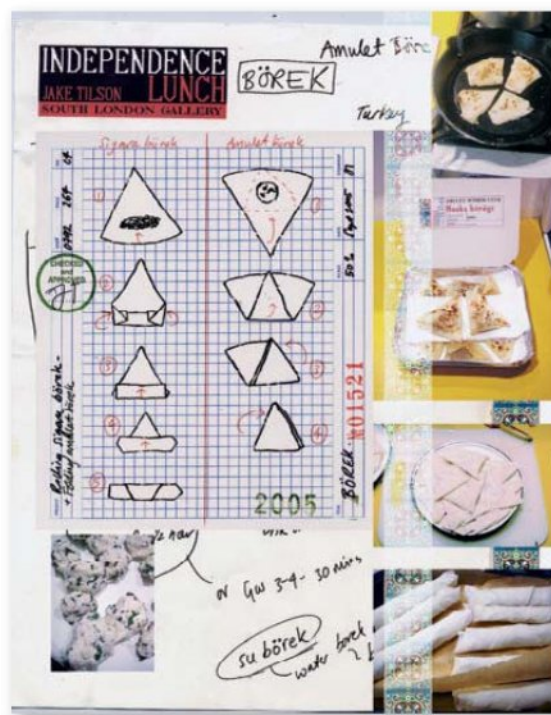


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# In the Beginning

On the occasion of our 100th issue, we salute our first

**S**AVEUR TELLS the life story of food—visiting the places it comes from, meeting the people who create it,” wrote founding editor-in-chief Dorothy Kalins in this magazine’s inaugural issue, in 1994. “As we trace food to its birthplace, we see it in a new way, understand it better, discover how it really tastes (and why).” Exactly 100 issues later, that guiding ethos hasn’t changed a bit. In fact, what’s remarkable about that first issue—a well-preserved copy of which has been rumored to fetch hundreds of dollars on eBay—is how effectively it set the tone and standards for every issue to follow, including the one you’re reading now.

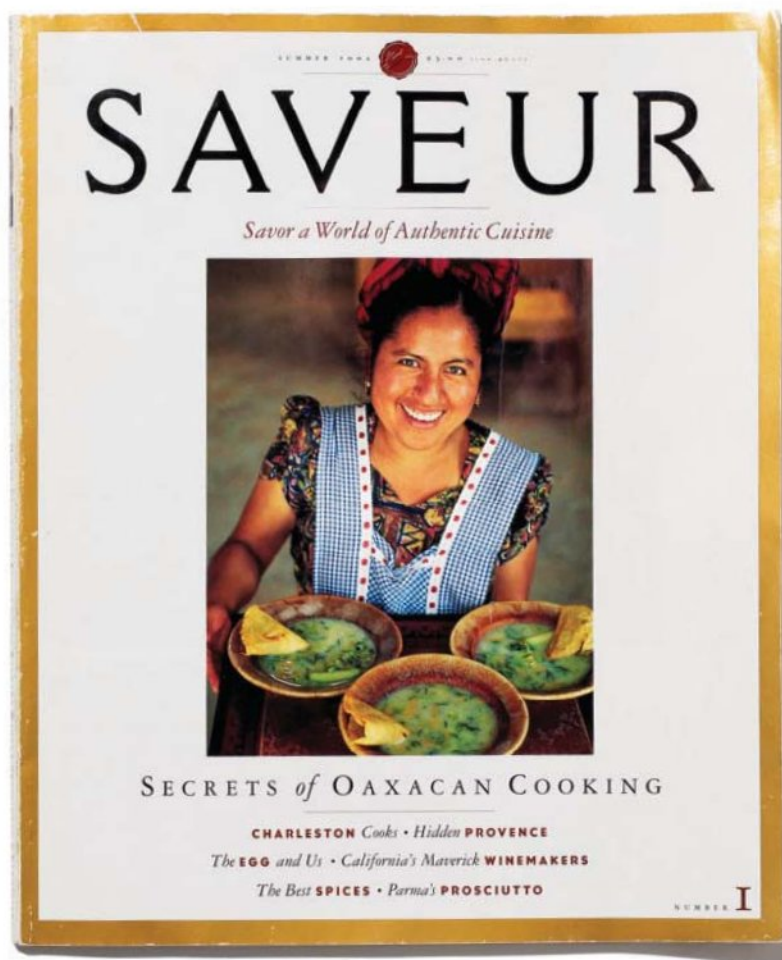
In what would become quintessential *SAVEUR* style, that issue cut through artifice and got straight to the heart of food and cooking—a relatively unusual feat for an American food magazine to pull off at that time. For its cover story, Peggy Knickerbocker, who went on to write more than a dozen pieces for *SAVEUR* over the next 13 years and became a consulting editor (a role she still fills), traveled to the highlands of south-central Mexico to analyze the earthy flavors of Oaxacan mole sauces. The result was a refined piece of journalism, free of pretense, loaded with detail—including a description of the process of shelling, roasting, and grinding cocoa beans—and infused with a genuine passion on the part of the writer for her

subject. “I think the editors—including Dorothy, Colman [Andrews], and Christopher [Hirsheimer]—were really trying to make a statement with that article,” Knickerbocker said recently. “They wanted it to be the embodiment of the magazine. I can remember researching and researching and researching to get it right.”

Barbara Hagerty’s feature on the Low-country cooking in and around Charleston, South Carolina, is equally heartfelt and evocative of place. Along with a recipe for she-crab soup and instructions on how to conduct a proper Carolinian oyster roast (which involves a soaking-wet

burlap bag and a very hot fire), Hagerty includes a method for making Miss Daisy’s red rice, which the writer came across at a humble café attached to a gas station—early evidence of *SAVEUR*’s no-stone-unturned approach to regional cuisine. A similar attitude led writer Allison Engel to the nondescript factory town of Waukesha, Wisconsin, to document one of the country’s most amazing purveyors of exotic spices, Penzeys—a story that was photographed by Hirsheimer, who forged much of the magazine’s distinctive visual style with her luminous, soulful photographs. Another benchmark was laid down with “The Egg and Us”, author John Willoughby’s exegesis—buttressed by history, science, folklore, and sociology—of that most perfect of nature’s creations: the egg.

With these and the other articles in that debut issue, *SAVEUR* established itself as something different, a magazine based on the simplest of tenets: taste, enjoy, keep it real. It’s right there in our motto, which still appears on every cover: “Savor a World of Authentic Cuisine.” Now that we think about it, though, maybe Miss Daisy Brown, of the above mentioned red rice recipe, put it even better: “Food is good,” she says on page 79 of our premiere issue. “Food is love.” —THE EDITORS





## THE SAVEUR LIST

## 12 Honey

These apiary treats offer an abundance of sweet surprises

**W**E ADORE THE LEAN, clean taste of American supermarket honey, but lately we've been hankering for the more sophisticated flavors found in monofloral varieties. Such honeys are made by bees that have access—usually because of the season or the strategic placement of hives by the beekeeper—predominantly to the nectar of

a single type of flower. Monoflorals can be intensely sweet, spicy, and even pleasingly bitter—in some cases all at once. We sampled nearly 200 honeys, ranging from pumpkin flower to coffee blossom. The following 12 proved irresistible, whether we added them to our tea or spread them on our morning toast. (See THE PANTRY, page 92, for sources.)

**1 | AGRIMONTANA MIELE DI FIORI DI CASTAGNO** (Italy; \$15 for 14 ounces)

Less bitter than many other chestnut varieties we tried, this honey has an appealing concentrated flavor that reminded us of caramel and prunes. It's a grown-up's honey: a spare drizzle goes well on a wedge of gorgonzola.

**2 | APIPHARM WILD THYME** (Greece; \$11.50 for 8.8 ounces)

Collected in the mountains of western Crete in June and July, this honey has a lovely, peppery accent. It's wonderful when spooned over yogurt or soft goat cheese.

**3 | BEESONLINE MANUKA** (New Zealand; \$14 for 8.8 ounces)

Bold flavors—we actually caught hints of tobacco and leather—prevail in this lush and distinctive honey. A good balance of bitter and sweet, with just a little saltiness, makes it ideal for dark teas like oolong.

**4 | J. P. BERGER MIEL DE LAVANDE** (France; \$12.99 for 8 ounces)

Pale yellow and slightly creamy, this honey delivers a gorgeous floral triple-header: we noticed not just the taste of the lavender from which the honey is made but also the fresh aromas of magnolias and peonies.

**5 | BIG TREE FARMS LYCHEE BLOSSOM** (Indonesia; \$10.99 for 10.5

ounces) Deeply hued, this raw honey is harvested on the island of Java. It has a surprising array of remarkably distinct flavors: molasses, berries, even black licorice and cloves.

**6 | LICCU MANIAS MEBI DE CADRILLONI** (Italy; \$12.50 for 8.8 ounces)

Asphodels that grow around Oristano, near the western coast of Sardinia, give this rich honey a bright, pleasantly floral taste, but it's the traces of cantaloupe and pineapple flavors that keep us going back for more.

**7 | MARSHALL'S FARM S.F. BAY AREA EUCALYPTUS** (California; \$9.50 for 8 ounces)

Although eucalyptus dominates this honey, the heady herbal flavor of its nectar is gently offset by a bit of acacia, which blooms at the same time. It makes a ready companion to peanut butter.

**8 | MOON SHINE TRADING COMPANY CALIFORNIA YELLOW STAR THISTLE** (California; \$6.50 for 9 ounces)

A mellow topping for cheese or nuts or for dipping slices of apple into, this honey is light but not uncomplicated in its subtle flavors. We

could discern pear and even a note of lemon custard.

**9 | MOUNTAINHONEY BLUE BORAGE** (New Zealand; \$11.99 for 17.6 ounces)

On the tongue, this dark amber honey made from the nectar of bright blue borage flowers bursts with the taste of butter-scotch. We think it's perfection when served over a warm scone.

**10 | NETTARE DEGLI IBLEI MIELE DI ARANCIO** (Italy; \$19 for 17.6 ounces)

This honey solidifies into a pleasing, evenly textured crystallized state at room temperature. Less sweet than other orange blossom honeys, it has a juicy tang and is especially satisfying when spread on toast.

**11 | THE SAVANNAH BEE COMPANY RAW TUPELO** (Georgia; \$19.99 for 20 ounces)

Bottled for just a few weeks in the early spring when the tupelo gum tree is in flower, this translucent, golden honey mingles an edge of anise with the sweetness of honeydew.

**12 | VOLCANO ISLAND HONEY COMPANY RARE HAWAIIAN ORGANIC WHITE HONEY** (Hawaii; \$14 for 8 ounces)

The product of the feathery yellow blooms of kiawe trees that grow in the Puako Forest, this is an eminently spreadable honey whose splendid taste hints of coconut and mango. —Sierra Burnett





# KITCHENWISE



## Hizzoner's Retreat

Former New York City mayor Ed Koch's kitchen typifies urban functionality

BY GEORGIA FREEDMAN PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

**S**EVENTEEN YEARS AFTER his 12-year tenure as New York City's mayor, Edward I. Koch (above, left) is only slightly less visible than he was as the city's chief executive. These days, he seems to be everywhere: working as a partner in the international law firm of Bryan Cave, appearing at book signings, parties, and political fund-raisers, or simply standing in line at the fish counter at Citarella, a specialty foods store. Given his high profile, Koch has little difficulty

getting a table at any New York City restaurant he wants to dine at, but as often as not he chooses to spend his evenings in the kitchen, cooking for himself.

When Koch left office, in 1989, he moved out of Gracie Mansion (the city's official mayoral residence) and into a newly renovated Greenwich Village apartment with a long galley kitchen. With its standard Maytag stove and Frigidaire refrigerator, which is usu-



## KITCHENWISE

ally stuffed to the gills with favorites like fruit juices and Diet Coke (facing page, right), the kitchen is utilitarian rather than glamorous, but its wide counter and ample storage space make it eminently functional, and Koch has never felt compelled to change it. "It serves well," he says.

Though the kitchen is separated from the bank of large windows in the living room, it is nevertheless designed to take advantage of them: it has two open entryways, one near the front door and one near the refrigerator that allows for easy communication between the kitchen and Koch's rosewood dining table and chairs. Flanking each of these doorways are mementos from his time as mayor, including photographs of Hizzoner riding a camel during an official visit to Egypt and of his two audiences with Pope John Paul II. The kitchen itself, however, has been left almost completely unadorned; the only decorative items are a painted tile (from a visit to China in 1979) and a small blue clock next to the stove.

Koch's cooking, like his kitchen, is practical and unpretentious. Having long ago decided to cook mostly for himself (his dinner parties are catered by Mitchel London, formerly the chef at Gracie Mansion), he has



the freedom to stick entirely to the foods that he loves to make. He began cooking on his own in 1956, when he first moved to the Village after completing law school at New York University, and though he grew up eating Jewish standbys like brisket and kishka, he has never tried to replicate his mother's dishes. "She was a terrible cook," he says matter-of-factly. He favors simple preparations and, over the years, has developed a repertoire of basic entrées—he eschews side dishes—that he can prepare quickly under the broiler: lamb chops, rib steaks with garlic, and salmon or swordfish seasoned with just salt and pepper (see recipe, page 90). "If you're a bachelor, which I am, you have to learn on your own," he says. "I just do it naturally."

Those dishes have stood him in good stead, and two or three times a week, when he is not dining out, Koch can be found at home, standing at the broiler, tongs in hand. "I have a suggestion for the makers of stoves," he says, ever quick to suggest remedies for everyday ills. "It is stupid to have the broiler on the bottom. The broiler should be at the top."

While his meat or fish cooks, he usually pours himself a glass of sancerre or grape



juice and makes an appetizer, eaten at the counter, of flatbread topped with taramosalata (a Greek spread of cured cod roe, lemon juice, and olive oil, to which he adds chopped onion) that he buys at a local supermarket. True to his bachelor ways, he dines in front of the TV in the living room, seemingly content on some evenings to watch the news instead of make it.

#### Would you like to share your own kitchen design ideas with other SAVEUR readers?

Send us photos of your kitchen, both overall and in detail, along with your name, address, and a few lines telling us what's special about it. Please note that unused submissions cannot be acknowledged or returned. Our address: Kitchenwise, SAVEUR, 304 Park Avenue South, 8th Floor, New York, NY 10010.



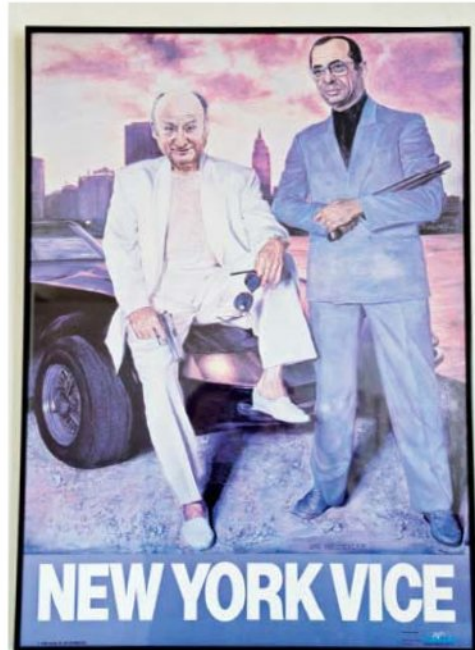
**On the Hoof (above)** The centerpiece on Ed Koch's dining table is this reproduction of a sculpture at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. Horses are a lifelong passion of his, and he has collected more than a dozen statues and replicas of them.

**1. Plain and Simple** Koch keeps plenty of crackers and flatbread in his kitchen. He has them for breakfast with a butter substitute and a glass of freshly squeezed orange juice and, in the evening, tops them with taramosalata to make his customary appetizer.

**2. Heat to the Meat** The microwave and the oven, broiler, and range, clustered in one corner of the kitchen, are standard issue and utilitarian. Of all Koch's kitchen appliances, the broiler is the most frequently used; in it he cooks a variety of simple meat and fish dishes.

**3. His Way** FreshDirect, a New York-area grocery delivery service, specially trims rib steaks for Koch, leaving a generous rim of fat. "People avoid fat, but fat is what gives flavor," he says.

**4. Slings and Arrows** This illustration of Koch and former New York governor Mario Cuomo originally appeared in *Penthouse* magazine and was intended as a humorous dig at their policies, but Koch liked the image so much that he asked the editors to send him a print, which he displays in his dining room.





# CELLAR

## Uncommon Grace

Volnay is a smooth, sensual red burgundy

BY MICHAEL STEINBERGER

**F**OR PEOPLE WHO like their red burgundies to be silky and elegant—in other words, for people who like red burgundies—there are no sweeter spots in the Burgundy region than Chambolle-Musigny and Volnay. Those two appellations produce pinot noirs that are paragons of refinement. But in Chambolle, the wines come with a steep price, owing to the fact that the village is home to two of Burgundy's most celebrated grand cru vineyards, Musigny and Bonnes Mares. Volnay, by contrast, has just a clutch of premiers crus. In depriving Volnay of a grand cru, the authorities may have slighted the locals, but they did consumers a favor. Volnay produces not only some of the finest red burgundies; it produces what are, as red burgundies go, some of the more affordable ones.

Volnay is a storybook village set on a hillside just a few miles outside of Beaune, Burgundy's main city. The appellation's hillside location, with its limestone-rich soil, yields wines of uncommon grace and sensuality, marked by aromas of cherries, red berries, and violets. And notwithstanding its lack of grands crus, Volnay has long been recognized for the high quality of its various terroirs, with more than 50 percent of its vineyards designated premier cru. The superstars of the appellation

are Domaine Michel Lafarge and Domaine Marquis d'Angerville, whose Clos des Chênes and Clos des Ducs, respectively, are considered the benchmark volnays. The former is usually a sturdy but also supremely elegant wine, while the latter is a model of purity and gentility. There are several other producers in Volnay that make excellent wines, notably Domaine de Montille and Domaine de la Pousse d'Or. Two of the most esteemed estates in the neighboring village of Meursault, Domaine des Comtes Lafon and Domaine Jean-François Coche-Dury, craft superb volnays. So does the celebrated Domaine Leroy. Three of Burgundy's preeminent négociants, Louis Jadot, Bouchard Père et Fils, and Joseph Drouhin, also turn out fine volnays.



## Tasting Notes

Here are 11 volnays from 2003 and 2004 that we've recently tasted. By all indications, 2005 is shaping up to be an even stronger year. See THE PANTRY, page 92, for sources.

**DOMAINE BOUCHARD PÈRE ET FILS CLOS DES CHÊNES 2004 (\$65).** Cherry, menthol, floral, and oak aromas fill the glass. A muscular volnay, with spicy cherry fruit across the palate and pronounced oak.

**DOMAINE DE LA POUSSE D'OR CLOS DE LA BOUSSE D'OR 2004 (\$90).** A pleasing bouquet of flowers, licorice, clove, and cherries. Tart red fruit on the palate, along with pronounced stemmy and earthy notes. The flavors, however, are a bit washed out.

**DOMAINE DE MONTILLE LES TAILLEPIEDS 2003 (\$100).** A wonderfully fragrant wine, with notes of cherries, cinnamon, violets, mint, and oak. Ripe, supple cherry fruit in the mouth, along with a gentle spiciness. Despite the pronounced tannins, surprisingly approachable for a young de Montille wine.

**DOMAINE DES COMTES LAFON SANTENOTS DU MILIEU 2003 (\$95).** A deep, expressive nose, highlighted by aromas of cassis, sandalwood, menthol, a touch of Coca-Cola, and a lemon rind twist. A voluptuous volnay but with ample structure to hold up the fruit.

**DOMAINE JEAN BOILLOT PÈRE ET FILS LES CAILLERETS 2003 (\$85).** A rich shade of red, matched by a big, assertive nose. Aromas of fresh raspberries, cinnamon, black pepper, earth, oak, and minerals. Leaner on the palate than the nose would suggest, but excellent red berry fruit and very good balance. A fine volnay.

**DOMAINE LEROY SANTENOTS-DU-MILIEU 2003 (\$570).** A blackberry-infused bouquet, with mineral and spice notes and a dash of cinnamon. A rich, full-bodied wine, marked by sweet blackberry fruit. Pronounced tannins, and fairly spicy in the mouth. Finishes quite sweet. As volnay prices go, the high cost of this wine is an exception to the norm.

**DOMAINE MARQUIS D'ANGERVILLE CLOS DES DUCS 2003 (\$80).** A somewhat muted bouquet, marked by menthol, violets, and clay, along with a hint of citrus. Ripe red fruits in the mouth, buttressed by floral and mineral notes.

**DOMAINE MICHEL LAFARGE CLOS DES CHÊNES 2003 (\$130).** An enticing nose of black cherries, violets, and black pepper, along with an appealing savory note. A wine that unfurls beautifully across the palate, with rich cherry fruit and an impeccable balance of tannins and acidity. A long finish rounds out this sensational wine.

**JOSEPH DROUHIN CLOS DES CHÊNES 2003 (\$70).** A nose bursting with ripe red fruits, cloves, flowers, and oak. A silken, quintessentially volnay texture. The palate brims with raspberries and spice but is just a little too fruit forward.

**MAISON LOUIS JADOT CLOS DES CHÊNES 2003 (\$70).** A bouquet of cherries, cinnamon, and Coca-Cola. Ripe, sweetish red fruit on the palate, along with a big dollop of spicy oak. A rich volnay but not a lot of ballast.

**MOREY-BLANC SANTENOTS 2003 (\$65).** A full-bodied, plush volnay, with sweet black cherry, sawdust, and tobacco flavors in the mouth; an intriguing bacon note, as well. A fairly tannic wine but with ample fruit to balance the structure. —M.S.



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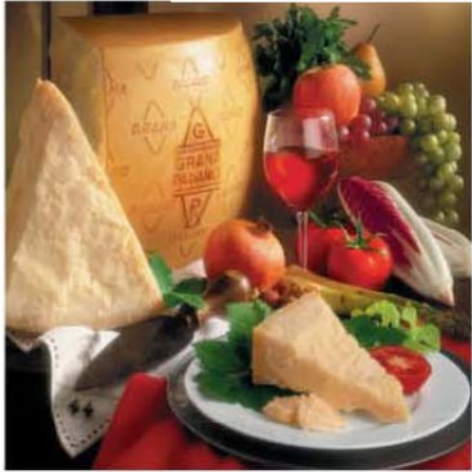


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## MEMORIES

out that the combo is unbeatable for survival. Still, sudden incarceration is one hell of a calamity. How did we deal with it?

Most of all, we shared food. I was not allowed family visits but could receive a food parcel every Monday from relatives. A typical parcel might contain cakes, cookies, candies, instant coffee, instant noodles, dried prawn relish, fried Chinese sausages, dried salted fish, fried chicken, or fried beef. It delivered a cholesterol and sodium overload, but the food had to last without refrigeration. After our release, none of us could tolerate such sweet, salty treats for at least the next decade.

Those parcels brought a merciful respite from the standard prison fare. Not long after sunrise, the prison kitchens sent hot rice gruel in large tin canisters to be distributed to some political prisoners and to elderly women, nursing mothers, and the small children who had entered the prison with their mothers because there was no one to look after them on the outside.

At ten in the morning, all prisoners received rice that was rough but edible and chickpea soup with a relish of salty fish paste, black as tar. If I allowed the chickpeas to settle, the clear broth was delicious. None of us touched the relish. Dinner arrived at around five in the afternoon and consisted of rice and vegetable soup, again with that evil-looking relish. Once a week every prisoner got a chunk of boiled meat, a small fried fish, or a hard-boiled egg.

Any side dishes had to come from our own parcels. I relished the coffee and the fermented Chinese tofu more than anything else. The poorest prisoners, whose families didn't have the means to send parcels, often earned extra food by doing other prisoners' laundry. The poorer convicts managed to look after one another with great efficiency, working to feed those too weak or ill to eat on their own. Women who were unable to nurse their babies found no shortage of willing wet nurses, many of them mothers who missed their own children.

THE NUMBING ROUTINES of prison life took place amid primitive, if endurable, surroundings. (Contrary to popular belief, I witnessed no rape or torture, although punishment for breaking rules could be harsh. Torture could, however, be part of the interrogation process.) The bed I rose from each morning when reveille sounded at five

was made up of a four-inch-high wood platform, a "mattress" composed of my five sarongs stacked one atop the other, a "pillow" fashioned from my own wool jacket wrapped in a towel, and a prison-issue blanket. After the morning head count came the first of our twice-daily baths, taken by means of two shared glazed-ware jars in the courtyard. In my cell I had a pot of water for drinking and brushing my teeth.

All prisoners in Myanmar are technically sentenced to "hard labor", and the lowest-class street criminals served their sentences fully, cleaning out other prisoners' refuse basins. Political prisoners, however, were not required to work, so I smuggled in thread and a tatting bobbin to keep my hands occupied, making yards of lace. Oh, how I came to hate lace! My cell had a window screened with wire and wood bars. I would stand before it for hours, staring at the morning flights of paddy birds or at the stars in the velvet sky or, sometimes, at a clump of weeds growing out of a nearby wall; at dusk, the tiny leaves turned translucent in the red-gold rays of the sun. That clump was the most beautiful growing thing I'd ever seen.

AT INSEIN I MET people from segments of society I would likely never have encountered on the outside. The prostitutes tended to be either neat and courteous or scruffy and loud. Murderers usually expressed horror and shame at what they had done, for the killings were usually committed out of fury or during a robbery gone wrong. But if you'd stabbed a philandering husband, you couldn't have been more popular among the other women prisoners. Drug dealers were almost universally detested and ostracized. Pickpockets invariably refused to teach anyone their wily tricks, though I did meet one, a friendly soul named Ma Pyu Win, who assured all us political prisoners that she would not touch our purses should we meet one day in the future on a crowded bus.

Interaction with my fellow prisoners was what got me through my toughest moments. A daily hardship for me was to wake up each morning in my nine-by-seven-foot cell and see the same old walls after having dreamt vividly during the night of living free in the world. My heart would sink, but it would be lifted just as quickly by my friends in the adjoining cells.

We shared our frustrations, jokes, songs (a good singer in prison is a blessing straight





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## MEMORIES



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from God), and, always, stories, because no books or letters were permitted to any prisoner at that time (a rule that has since changed). *Of Mice and Men* left us stifling sobs, *Dracula* gave us the shivers, and *Gone with the Wind* took three days to tell. What we dreamed about the most, however, was food. We would spend the empty hours describing to one another the dishes we longed for.

"Check the duck to see if it's tender," I'd call out to my friend Swe in cell four. "And add a bit more water if you want."

Or, May from cell six would say, "Myint, don't forget to add shrimp at the last minute to the soup pot," and Myint from cell three would reply that the curry tasted lovely and her coconut rice was almost ready. As we sipped the bland dinner soup of greens boiled to a mush we might remark, "Isn't the salad great? Have you ever tasted such fresh lettuce?" If we concentrated hard enough we could almost taste our invisible dishes.

Soon, agonized yells would emanate from the other cells: "You're all crazy! Please shut up! You're making us so hungry!"

"Have some roast duck," I would reply, undaunted.

We missed noodle dishes terribly; in Yangon good noodles could be had at every street corner or marketplace at any time of night or day. We daydreamed of mohinga, a dish from the south of Myanmar made of rice noodles in thick, pungent fish broth. We imagined the spicy noodles—so hot with pepper, galangal, and dry and fresh chiles that they are called "burn the tongue noodles"—made by the Rakhine people of the country's western coast. We longed for the delicate ones, laced with fragrant herbs, made by the Shan of the eastern plateau, and those made with piquant fermented bamboo shoots by the Kachin of the northern mountains.

We also deeply missed fresh vegetables. We were delighted when officers decided to plant long beans on rows of bamboo stands in the prison yard. The vines were thick with blue blossoms; they attracted butterflies, which rushed frantically from one flower to another.

Many of us took our daily walk in that small patch of heaven, illicitly snapping off and eating a few of the beans before they had grown to a substantial size. I have



## METHOD

### Pei Daunt Shay Thoke

(Myanmar-Style Long Bean Salad)

This recipe is based on one in Ma Thanegi's book *An Introduction to Myanmar Cuisine*. Bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Add 1/2 lb. long beans (see page 92) cut thinly lengthwise on the bias into 2" pieces; cook until crisp-tender, about 1 minute. Drain long beans; rinse under cold running water; set aside. Heat 1 1/2 cups peanut oil in a small pot over medium heat until temperature reaches 325° on a deep-fry thermometer. Add 2 very thinly sliced shallots and fry, stirring, until golden, 3–4 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer shallots to a paper towel-lined plate. Reserve the frying oil. In a medium bowl, toss together the long beans, 2 tbsp. finely chopped roasted peanuts, 4 1/2 tsp. fish sauce (see page 92), 1 tbsp. fresh lime juice, 2 tsp. sugar, and 1 tbsp. of the frying oil (reserve remaining oil for another use). Season the salad with salt to taste. Sprinkle shallots on top of the salad just before serving. Serves 2–4.

never tasted beans so tender and sweet. As we nibbled, I would tell my friends of a wonderful recipe for a salad of long beans, leading them through it to create yet another virtual meal.

OUR IMAGINARY FEASTS ended every night at nine, when taps was quietly played and all talking had to cease. We would settle into our beds, lying awake as we allowed ourselves for the first time that day to think of our children, husbands, parents, lovers, and friends. Eventually we would slip into sleep, heartened by the knowledge that, come morning, we would plan our next meal. 🍴

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI



# SOURCE



## Miracle Cure

These streaky slices offer smoky salvation

BY TODD COLEMAN

**E**VERY PACKAGE OF thick-cut bacon from Benton's Smoky Mountain Country Hams, of Madisonville, Tennessee, should come with a warning label: This product may put you off conventional store-bought bacon forever. To people accustomed to thin strips that emerge from the pan only two ways—flabby or dry—the meaty slices from Benton's come as a revelation: their generous size and the perfect ratio of fat to meat add up to bacon that's crisp and chewy at the same time. This is breakfast meat you can literally sink your teeth into. Then there's the flavor: intensely redolent of the hickory and applewood over which Benton's smokes its pork bellies for a whopping 72 hours—up to three times as long as many other artisanal producers do. The smell of Benton's bacon frying is enough to lure strangers in from the street.

The man behind this cured-pork goodness, Allan Benton, has been smoking hams and bacon since 1973. Benton's is a small operation—just five employees working out of a low-slung building that doubles as a retail store—and he has only modest plans for expanding. “We want to keep it small,” he says, “but we feel like we have a product that can compete with any in the country.” The bacon-making process starts with fresh pork bellies from various farms in the Midwest. After being hand-trimmed, the fat-streaked slabs are rubbed with salt, brown sugar, and pepper and packed in a cooler, where they remain for about ten days. The meat is left to age in temperature-controlled rooms over a period of three weeks—a process that extracts moisture while further preserving and seasoning the product—and then it's off to the smokehouse, with its wood-burning stove, for three days. After smoking, the meat is given an hour's rest before it's sliced into thick strips and vacuum-sealed. The result? The most mouthwatering bacon around. Four one-pound packages of Benton's Tennessee hickory-smoked country bacon cost \$18.00, plus shipping. To order, call 423/442-5003 or visit [www.bentonshams.com](http://www.bentonshams.com).



# CLASSIC

## Roman Art

Spaghetti alla carbonara pleases even the most finicky palates

BY MEI CHIN



in Rome, derives its name from the Italian word for coal. Legend attributes the dish variously to charcoal makers, who presumably required a cheap and nourishing meal after a day of hard work; to the Carbonari, members of secret political societies in 19th-century Italy; or simply to the fact that the dish was once made over a charcoal fire. Present-day historians argue, however, that carbonara is a post–World War II invention, born of defeated yet still imaginative Italians compelled to satisfy American GIs with powdered eggs and bacon, those staples of army mess tents. Adherents to this theory generally hold that *carbonara* merely refers to the sometimes coal-speckled look of the dish, achieved by the addition of plenty of ground black pepper and the crisped pieces of

over spaghetti and, profaning a traditional recipe taken from Marcella Hazan's *More Classic Italian Cooking*, used bacon instead of pancetta or guanciale. In deference to Yar's ferocious appetite, I also doubled the amount.

Carbonara is a dish for all seasons, to be consumed in great quantities. It is luscious, simple, and, thanks to all the eggs and fatty pork, slightly naughty. It can be enjoyed at any hour of the day, though the ideal time is dawn, after a long night of revelry. Experience has taught me that carbonara is also a nearly foolproof way to a man's heart—unless he happens to be watching his cholesterol. I have cooked it for many, with heated results. But on the occasions when I make spaghetti alla carbonara for myself alone, I always think of my little brother, who finally got over his distaste for the plant kingdom but still considers carbonara one of his truest passions.

### METHOD

#### Spaghetti alla Carbonara

This recipe is based on one in *More Classic Italian Cooking* by Marcella Hazan (Alfred A. Knopf, 1978). Heat 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add 4 cloves crushed garlic; cook until golden, about 1 minute. Remove and discard garlic. Add one 2½-lb. chunk pancetta cut into ½"-long strips; cook until edges are crisp, 5–6 minutes. Add ⅔ cup white wine; simmer until thickened, 2–3 minutes. Remove from heat. Bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Add 1 lb. dried spaghetti and cook until al dente. Drain, reserving ¼ cup pasta water. In a large bowl, whisk together ⅔ cup finely grated parmigiano-reggiano, ¼ cup finely grated pecorino-romano, 2 tbsp. finely chopped flat-leaf parsley, and 2 eggs. Slowly drizzle in reserved pasta water while whisking constantly. Add spaghetti along with reserved pancetta mixture. Season with salt and a generous amount of pepper. Toss to combine. Serves 4.

**I** MASTERED spaghetti alla carbonara—that addictive Italian tangle of eggs, cured pork, and pasta—when I was nine years old, in an effort to appease that most difficult of customers, my little brother, Yar. All forms of vegetation were unacceptable to his palate, which was so finicky that in any given dish it could detect a single fleck of parsley, the slightest shaving of ginger, and anything that had come within three miles of a piece of spinach. The irony that his name is the Mandarin word for sprout was not lost on my family.

Carbonara, which appears to have originated

meat. Traditional Roman carbonara consists of a holy trinity of whole eggs, pancetta or guanciale (cured pork jowl), and pecorino-romano cheese—never cream, an ingredient that many American all-you-can-eat-pasta chefs are wont to add. A carbonara sauce should gild, not asphyxiate, the noodle. True to the Roman way, I always remember to temper the eggs with pasta water (to keep them from stiffening up when they meet the steaming-hot pasta), and I use spaghetti whenever possible.

To make Yar's carbonara, though, I was forced to depart slightly from orthodoxy: I gave in to my brother's preference for capellini



## Saveur Road Trip

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# Santa Barbara



**W**hen it comes to appreciating Santa Barbara and its wine region, the 2004 movie *Sideways* only scratched the surface. To become fully acquainted with this area, you have to do the town and not just the country. Our food- and wine-focused road trip does both. The seaside city of Santa Barbara grew up around a huddle of 18th-century Spanish Colonial adobes, and the charm of that village-like setting may be

Arriving at the award-winning Beckmen Vineyards in Los Olivos in a 2007 Lexus LS 460. Netting keeps hungry birds from sampling the luscious, biodynamically farmed grapes at this family-run winery.



## Saveur Road Trip

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felt in the city's contemporary buildings and palm-lined streets. Forty minutes north of the city—up through the San Marcos Pass, its gold-green hills studded with live oaks; past Lake Cachuma and its horse farms—lies Santa Barbara County's wine country. A hungry and thirsty traveler could spend months here, but for those of you who don't have that kind of time, we've singled out some highlights—where to eat, where to drink, and where to stay. —Laurie Drake

■ **AU BON CLIMAT WINERY** Au Bon Climat's owner, Jim Clendenen, whom the *Los Angeles Times* anointed winemaker of the year in 1992, is as justifiably famous as the wines he has handcrafted for more than two decades. Au Bon Climat is open for tasting only two days a year (during the October Harvest Festival and the April Vintners Festival), but you can get pours of this elite label at the tasting room at the Santa Ynez Inn Wine Cellar. *Santa Ynez Inn Wine Cellar, 3631 Sagunto Street, Santa Ynez (805/688-8688; www.aubonclimat.com).*

■ **THE BALLARD INN RESTAURANT** Chef Budi Kazali offers a sophisticated pan-Asian menu, with an emphasis on the flavors of the Pacific Rim—as in the honey-tamarind-glazed quail with arugula-coconut salad and the “new style” hamachi sashimi with

Spago in LA and Michael Mina in San Francisco but probably not at your corner wine shop. For that reason alone, a visit to Beckmen is essential. The grounds, which feature a deck overlooking a pond as well as picnic gazebos, are stately and restrained, but the estate-grown Rhône varietals this winery is known for yield rich and opulent wines. *2670 Ontiveros Road, Los Olivos (805/688-8664; www.beckmenvineyards.com); open daily 11 A.M.–5 P.M.*

■ **LA SUPER-RICA TAQUERIA** Julia Child was a loyal customer of this taco stand, and, as if that weren't testament enough to the merit of the place, a line of patrons snakes around the whitewashed shack at any time of day. It's worth the wait. With the exception of the rice, beans, and homemade salsa, everything is cooked to order. The guacamole is fresh, and the tacos are the real deal: handmade corn tortillas piled with adobado (marinated pork), bistec (charbroiled steak), or rajas (a tangle of grilled pasilla chiles and onions with melted cheese). *622 North Milpas Street, Santa Barbara (805/963-4940); open Sunday–Thursday, 11 A.M.–9 P.M.; Friday–Saturday, 11 A.M.–9:30 P.M.*

■ **SANTA BARBARA CERTIFIED FARMERS' MARKETS** Professional chefs and home cooks alike plan their weekly menus around the farmers' markets held every Tuesday and Saturday in the city of Santa Barbara. Among the almost uniformly fine vendors, a few stalls consistently stand out: Spring Hill Jersey Cheese, a farmstead-cheese maker in Petaluma whose pasture-grazed Jersey cows produce a high-butterfat milk, a basis for cheddar and jack cheeses and cultured butter that are incomparably rich and creamy; Calimoya, a nearby orchard that cultivates exotic bananas, velvety-sweet cherimoyas, and avocados; and the Santa Barbara Pistachio Company, a family

farm that grows, roasts, and packs little green nuts possessed of a delicate crunch and meaty flavor that make them truly addictive. *Saturday market: downtown Santa Barbara, corner of Santa Barbara and Cota streets, 8:30 A.M.–12:30 P.M. Tuesday market: old-town Santa Barbara, the 500 and 600 blocks of State Street, 3 P.M.–6:30 P.M. (805/962-5354; www.sbfarmersmarket.org).*

■ **SAN YSIDRO RANCH** Located on 500 rolling acres in the hills of Montecito, the San Ysidro Ranch is a historic retreat (John and Jacqueline Kennedy honeymooned there) laced with hiking trails and tree-lined paths that lead to views of the Pacific Ocean. Forty guest cottages are dispersed across the property and flank a hillside creek. The Stonehouse, the ranch's restaurant, serves regional cuisine, including herbs and vegetables from the ranch's garden, in a 150-year-old stone building. *900 San Ysidro Lane, Santa Barbara (805/565-1700 or 800/368-6788; www.sanyisidororanch.com).*

■ **FOUR SEASONS RESORT—THE BILTMORE SANTA BARBARA** For 80 years this grand hotel, a Spanish-style palace with gold-leaf ceilings, burnished tile floors, and graceful archways, has been drawing Hollywood royalty (Greta Garbo, Clark Gable, and Joan Crawford, to name a few). The resort lies within walking distance of the town of Montecito. *1260 Channel Drive, Santa Barbara (805-969-2261; www.fourseasons.com).*



avocado and soy-yuzu vinaigrette—that meshes brilliantly with the local wines on the restaurant's ample list. *2436 Baseline Avenue, Ballard (805/688-7770; www.ballardinn.com); dinner only.*

■ **BECKMEN VINEYARDS** Distribution of Beckmen's celebrated wines is frustratingly limited—you'll find them at places like

Facing page, left to right, top to bottom: fresh off the grill at La Super-Rica Taqueria; author Laurie Drake and the 2007 Lexus LS 460 in the driveway of The Ballard Inn; shopping at the farmers' market in old-town Santa Barbara; downtown Santa Barbara; lunch is served at The Ballard Inn; the Santa Ynez Valley; on the tasting-room deck at Beckmen.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BARBARA RIES









# MIGHTY SHRIMP

**F**or a critter so small, shrimp looms large on our menus. In terms of popularity, no other seafood comes close. Kids love it, grown-ups love it, and even people who “don’t eat seafood” love it. And that’s no surprise: whether it’s slapped on the grill, sautéed in butter and garlic, or simmered in a spice-infused broth, it pleases the senses immediately in a way that few other foods do. The wild-caught American varieties to which we pay tribute in the pages that follow have

become an everyday reminder that we are a nation that begins and ends at the ocean; from Maine to California to the Gulf of Mexico, America’s coastal waters offer up a briny bounty. We think it’s high time we honored this all-American food, the people who help bring it to

*A Celebration  
of AMERICA'S  
FAVORITE Seafood*

our tables, and the many ways it can be cooked.  
—THE EDITORS

photographs by **ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI, PENNY DE LOS SANTOS, and JAMES OSELAND**

Shrimp scampi with linguine, facing page, is an Italian-American classic and, like so many dishes made with the versatile crustacean, easy to make.







Part ONE

# WHY WE LOVE SHRIMP



**W**E AMERICANS CONSUME MORE THAN A BILLION POUNDS OF SHRIMP A YEAR. IT'S TEMPTING TO BELIEVE THAT OUR APPETITE FOR THIS CRUSTACEAN IS BORN OF OUR LOVE FOR CONVENIENCE.

Nature, after all, seems to have created it expressly for our delectation: pop off the head and remove the shell, and all you're left with is succulent meat and a nifty fantail handle. You can cook shrimp almost any old way in the time it takes to put the beer on ice; it pairs with virtually any partner, from butter and lemon juice to ginger and chiles and, lest we forget, cocktail sauce (read more about that Yankee favorite on page 87); and it is the key ingredient in countless beloved recipes, a few of which we've included on these pages. But we think there's more to our adoration of shrimp than ease and adaptability.

Despite the predominance of farm-raised imports in recent years, shrimp continues to evoke for us an innate connection to our coastal waters—the warm Gulf and its estuaries, the chilly seas off Maine, the West Coast's vast expanse. Wild shrimp is the mainstay of America's domestic fishery

A restaurant specializing in shrimp, in Galveston, Texas, above left. Above right, peeling and eating boiled brown Gulf of Mexico shrimp.



income: 95 percent of the 200 million pounds of the domestic shrimp brought to market in this country each year is net-caught in open water by sustainable methods. What is more, wild-caught American shrimp—unlike their American pond-raised counterparts, which are of a single species, *Litopenaeus*

*vannamei*, commonly called Pacific white—reflect a striking diversity of shape, size, color, and character: tender pink, white, and Gulf of Mexico brown shrimp; delicate and sweet Maine shrimp; tiny, candy-like Pacific pinks; California spot shrimp; lobsterlike rock shrimp from Florida; and others (see Know





Your American Shrimp, page 46, for descriptions of some of our favorites). American shrimp, in short, is a homegrown food worth celebrating.

OF COURSE, celebrating American shrimp is really all about eating them. And Americans have gotten

very good at doing that over the past century or so, as evidenced by the countless recipes that have sprung from virtually every region, state, and ethnic enclave in the country—consider the New Orleans standbys barbecued shrimp and the shrimp boil; Italian-American favorites like shrimp scampi with

linguine; and the pure pleasure of a Maine shrimp chowder. Our shrimp dishes are a mirror of who we are. This agile, antennae sea creature of the subphylum Crustacea and the order Decapoda, however, entered the 20th century as a relative unknown to most American palates, save for the inhabitants

## RECIPE

## Shrimp Scampi with Linguine

SERVES 4

Like veal parmesan, this dish (shown on page 41)—redolent of garlic and white wine—is a purely Italian-American creation. *Scampi* is actually the plural form of the Italian word for a type of shrimp found in the Gulf of Venice.

## Salt

- 3/4 lb. dried linguine
- 12 tbsp. butter, cubed
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 12 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 lbs. medium shrimp, such as Gulf of Mexico brown, peeled and deveined
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups white wine
- 1/2 cup chopped flat-leaf parsley
- Grated zest and juice of 1 lemon

**1.** Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook linguine until al dente, 9–10 minutes. Ladle out and reserve 3/4 cup of the pasta water, then drain linguine.

**2.** Meanwhile, combine 4 tbsp. butter, oil, pepper flakes, and garlic in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring, until garlic is fragrant, about 1 minute. Add shrimp, season to taste with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally, until just pink but not completely cooked through, 2–3 minutes. Transfer shrimp to a plate and set aside.

**3.** Return skillet to medium-high heat. Add wine and cook, stirring and scraping bottom of skillet to release any browned bits, until sauce has thickened, 8–10 minutes. Return shrimp to skillet along with cooked linguine and 1/2 cup reserved cooking water; toss well. Add remaining butter, parsley, lemon zest and juice, and reserved cooking water; toss well. Cook until sauce has thickened slightly, 1–2 minutes more. Serve immediately.



## SHRIMP

of the Gulf, Atlantic, and Pacific coasts, who were lucky enough to be able to enjoy shrimp more or less fresh from the net. By contrast, in the 21st century shrimp is a veritable staple in homes and restaurants across the country, regardless of those places' proximity to the ocean. The story of what happened in those intervening years is a typically American tale of enterprise, innovation, and luck.

By the turn of the 20th century, shrimping was an established trade all along the Gulf coast and in parts of coastal California. Much of the catch was hauled in by hand by means of seine nets (a shallow-water bottom-dragging variety), often by fishermen of Asian background: Filipino shrimpers had settled in Louisiana as early as the 18th century, and those of Chinese ancestry, using handcrafted redwood boats,

By the end of World War I, the introduction of a technique called otterboard trawl netting, combined with other technical advances, helped launch a revolution in the industry, allowing boats to travel

rising middle-class incomes foretold a coming golden age.

Arguably, the tipping point in America's love affair with shrimp was reached in the late 1940s, thanks to a couple of relatively chance discoveries. In 1949, two resourceful shrimpers out of Key West decided to drop a trawl net after sunset while heading back to the dock from Florida's Dry Tortugas following a day

of unsuccessful trawling. When they hauled in the net from the muddy sea bottom, it was bulging with gorgeous Gulf of Mexico pink shrimp. Marine biologists had long suspected that vast shrimp beds lay off Florida's southwestern coast, but it took that lucky encounter for them to confirm that they were

*We Americans  
consume more than a  
BILLION POUNDS of  
shrimp a year*

farther from shore and return with larger catches. Around that same time, the American entrepreneur Clarence Birdseye discovered while living in the Canadian province of Labrador that meats and seafood frozen quickly in that region's extreme winter cold retained their taste and texture, which wasn't true



Above, from left, emptying the nets onto the deck of a shrimp boat in Florida; a sign bearing friendly advice in Wrangell, Alaska; raw shrimp on display at a Whole Foods Market in Florida.

were active in the San Francisco Bay at the time of the Civil War. Some fresh shrimp made it beyond the coastal states before the 20th century—sent by train in barrels repacked with fresh ice at designated stops along the way—but it was the advent of canning that introduced shrimp to a wider market; the first shrimp cannery opened in Louisiana in 1867.

of foods that had frozen gradually. Inspired by this discovery, Birdseye developed the technology on which an entire quick-freezing industry would be based. Eventually huge quantities of freshly caught shrimp could be flash-frozen and, with the advent of cross-country trucking, shipped almost anywhere. By the mid-20th century, the convergence of those improved technologies and

right: until then, no one had figured out that pink shrimp, unlike whites (the predominant catch at the time), slept in the mud by day and came out only at night.

Just a few years earlier, a shrimp processor and part-time inventor named James Lapeyre accidentally stepped on a shrimp on the floor of his father's processing plant in Louisiana (*continued on page 48*)

## RECIPE

## Barbecued Shrimp

SERVES 4

Despite its name, this dish (right) never touches a barbecue or grill. A New Orleans classic, barbecued shrimp are bathed in a buttery sauce that's enlivened with loads of hot sauce, worcestershire sauce, and garlic. This version is based on one served by chef Tory McPhail at the hallowed eatery Commander's Palace. Make sure you have plenty of bread on hand to sop up the delicious sauce.

- 16 jumbo shrimp, such as Gulf of Mexico pink, peeled and deveined (tails left on)
- 2 tbsp. creole or cajun seasoning
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped fresh rosemary leaves
- 1/2 cup beer, preferably Abita Amber
- 6 tbsp. hot sauce, preferably Crystal brand
- 6 tbsp. worcestershire sauce
- 5 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 12 tbsp. cold butter, cut into small pieces
- 1 loaf crusty french bread

1. Heat a large skillet over medium heat until hot. Meanwhile, put shrimp and creole seasoning into a bowl; toss to coat. Set aside. Add oil and garlic to skillet and cook until golden, about 1 minute. Add rosemary and cook for 2–3 seconds. Add shrimp and cook, flipping once, until it starts to turn pink, about 30 seconds. Transfer shrimp to a large plate; set aside. Add beer, hot sauce, worcestershire, and lemon juice to skillet; stir well. Cook, stirring, until thickened, 7–8 minutes.

2. Remove skillet from heat; whisk in butter a few pieces at a time (sauce will start to thicken). Return shrimp to skillet; toss to coat. Return skillet to medium heat and cook until shrimp are cooked through, 2–3 minutes. Transfer shrimp and sauce to 4 deep plates. Serve with chunks of crusty french bread for dipping.







## SHRIMP

**1 | ROCK** (*Sicyonia brevirostris*)

Rock shrimp—harvested in the deep waters off the southwestern coast of Florida from September through December and so called because of its ridged, armorlike shell—ranges from three to four and a half inches long. Rock shrimp fetch almost twice as much money per pound as most other wild-caught varieties. Its springy, sweet, lobsterlike flesh cooks fast and is perfect for grilling or broiling.



1

**2 | GULF OF MEXICO BROWN** (*Farfantepenaeus aztecus*)

Roughly four inches long, with light brown shells, these Gulf shrimp are harvested primarily in May and June, though shrimpers often land them throughout the year. Their soft, rich flesh gives a pleasant hint of iodine—prominent in the flesh of most shrimp, as are calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, and iron—and makes them excellent for emphatically seasoned dishes like gumbo.



2

# KNOW YOUR AMERICAN SHRIMP

**3 | NORTHERN PINK** (*Pandalus borealis*)

These two- to three-inch-long, bright pink crustaceans are also known as Maine shrimp, and they have a cult following among the residents of that state (see North Atlantic Treasure, page 51). Harvested in the cold waters off Maine's rugged coast from December to April, northern pinks are revered for their intense flavor and are a favorite for chowders. True aficionados eat them raw.



3

**4 | PACIFIC PINK** (*Pandalus jordani*)

These sweet-tasting chickpea- to chestnut-size crustaceans are referred to variously as candy, popcorn, bay, or salad shrimp and are rarely sold whole. Caught along the coastline of the Pacific



4





## SHRIMP



5



6



7

Northwest from April through October, they have a reddish-pink color and are put to fine use in salads.

##### 5 | CALIFORNIA SPOT (*Pandalus platyceros*)

These shrimp are a radiant coral pink and are roughly six inches long. Identified by a white spot on each side of the torso, the California spot shrimp is caught along the Pacific coast from Alaska to central California and is usually sold either live or frozen whole. Also called spot prawns—a source of confusion compounded by the fact that shrimp in general are often referred to as prawns in the UK and its former territories—these shrimp have a sweet, crablike taste and lend themselves beautifully to grilling.

##### 6 | GULF OF MEXICO PINK (*Farfantepenaeus duorarum*)

Their colors range from coral pink to brown, depending on their waters of origin, but mature pink shrimp always have a dark dot on each side of the torso between the third and fourth shell segments. Generally larger than their white and brown Gulf counterparts, pinks are the dominant species harvested off Florida's western coast. This full-flavored shrimp has a subtle tanginess and resilient flesh, which makes it ideal for sautéing.

##### 7 | GULF OF MEXICO WHITE (*Litopenaeus setiferus*)

These four- to four-and-a-half-inch-long shrimp, generally harvested from August to November and also in May and June, have grayish shells, a sweet, earthy taste, and a firm, meaty texture. Sometimes called lake shrimp, whites are caught in great quantities in the Gulf's inshore marshes and estuaries.

—JENNIFER SALERNO



## SHRIMP

(continued from page 44) and was surprised to see the nearly intact creature squirt out of its shell across the floor. Lapeyre went home and tinkered with the rubber rollers on his mother's washing machine; that tinkering eventually yielded a contraption that rapidly shelled shrimp. Lapeyre secured a patent on his shrimp peeler, and the machines that evolved from his invention could shell hundreds of pounds of shrimp an hour.

Within a couple of years, millions of dollars' worth of "pink gold" was streaming forth from the Dry Tortugas beds alongside the

sures, the Southern Shrimp Alliance, a trade group, has created a certification mark ("Certified Wild American Shrimp") that makes it easier for buyers of Gulf shrimp to identify wild-caught

varieties—and to recognize the benefits of embracing the glorious shrimp caught in their own waters. —WAYNE CURTIS, author of *And a Bottle of Rum* (Crown, 2006), and DAVID MCANINCH

## Part TWO

# A DAY ON THE WATER



usual catches of white and brown Gulf shrimp and—thanks to all those innovations in processing, transport, and refrigeration—were being shipped across the land, shattering pre-1949 predictions that the Gulf's shrimp yield had leveled off. By 1957, buoyed by the increase in supply, shrimp had overtaken tuna and salmon as the United States' highest-revenue fishery. The financial fortunes of domestic shrimping have fluctuated since then, but Americans' appetite for the crustacean has continued to grow. Since 2000, sales of farm-raised shrimp from facilities in Asia and South America have surpassed those of wild-caught American varieties. In response to that and other pres-



**I**N THE PREDAWN DARKNESS, RAY BRANDHURST THROTTLES BACK THE ENGINE. HIS 47-FOOT SHRIMP BOAT, THE *FOUR WINDS*, APPROACHES A SET OF CLOSED FLOODGATES FLANKED BY LEVEES.

The shrimp that Brandhurst hopes to catch are waiting in the salt marshes on the other side. After a quick call to the gatekeeper's office, many miles away in New Orleans, he learns that they'll be keeping the gates closed for a few more hours to let the tide recede. Brandhurst makes some colorful remarks, then gently eases the boat up into the marsh grass. "We're losing at least two drags sitting here," says Michael Couture, Brandhurst's 33-year-old deckhand.

Unlike the captains of the large trawlers that pull shrimp from the open

waters of the Gulf, Brandhurst, a 49-year-old inshore and near-shore shrimper based in Saint Bernard Parish, Louisiana, cruises the marshes and the sea close to land. His quarry is the just-mature brown and white shrimp that have not yet left their shallow-water nursery grounds to return to the deeper, saltier Gulf waters where they were hatched. A New Orleans native, Brandhurst can trace his lineage back to 17th-century Basque harpoon fishermen. "To be a good shrimper," he says, "it's got to be in your blood."

Just a few minutes before eight o'clock, the metal floodgates



swing open. Brandhurst's fiberglass boat, with its net-draped aluminum rigging, is among the first to sail through the 50-foot-wide channel into the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (known locally as the "Mr. Go"). The shrimp that live within its depths and in the marshes around it can be caught with skimmer nets that extend out from either side of the boat while trolling along the surface or in shallow water, or they can be ferreted out from deeper waters with trawl nets. Today Brandhurst will use the latter method.

Soon Couture jumps into action, unraveling green nets, which start slithering into the water like massive tentacles. Weighted trawl

Above, from left, tools on the deck of the *Four Winds*; Ray Brandhurst in the boat's cabin; a dock worker unloading the catch.



## SHRIMP

boards—two picnic table-size panels that extend outward and force open the mouth of the net as it slides along the waterway's bottom, about 30 feet below the surface—plunge in next. Brandhurst sets a course parallel to the marsh, slows the boat to a brisk walking speed, then sits back in his chair and tucks into his breakfast: a cellophane-wrapped doughnut, a chocolate milk, and a Kool.

SOME AFICIONADOS swear that white shrimp are superior to brown shrimp in taste, but

## METHOD

**Shrimp Boil**

According to Howard Mitcham in *Creole Gumbo and All That Jazz: A New Orleans Seafood Cookbook* (Addison-Wesley, 1978), whose recipe we've adapted, "the best of all ways to eat shrimp is to boil them, peel them yourself, plop them down your gullet, and wash them down with plenty of good cold beer". The key to creating an authentic and delicious shrimp boil (right) is to concoct a spicy brew in which to cook the shrimp. Put 1 cup salt, 1/4 cup worcestershire sauce, 1 to 2 tsp. cayenne, 6 coarsely chopped ribs celery (with any leaves), two 3-oz. packages Zatarain's crab or shrimp boil seasoning (see page 92), 2 chopped large yellow onions, 1 head garlic halved crosswise, 1 sliced lemon, and 2 gallons water into a large stockpot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium and boil gently for 30 minutes. Add 5 lbs. raw head-on, shell-on large shrimp, such as Gulf of Mexico white, stir well, and cook until firm, 5-7 minutes. Drain contents of pot through a large colander, discarding the liquid, then transfer shrimp and any of the remaining aromatics to a large platter. Peel and eat the shrimp, along with cocktail sauce (see method, page 52), if you like. Serves 6-8.





## RECIPE

**Stir-Fried Shrimp with Snow Peas**

SERVES 4

This Cantonese-style dish (right), from Chinese cooking expert Eddie Schoenfeld (see page 86), involves coating and marinating the shrimp in a mixture of sherry, egg white, salt, cornstarch, and oil, which gives them a luscious consistency. Before cooking the shrimp, Schoenfeld tosses them in ice water and salt to firm them up. He also prefers to thicken the sauce with potato starch, which produces a lighter result than cornstarch—a trick he learned from professional Chinese chefs.

- 3/4 lb. medium shrimp, such as Gulf of Mexico white, peeled, deveined, and halved lengthwise
- 1 1/2 tbsp. salt
- 2 1/2 tbsp. dry sherry
- 1/4 tsp. freshly ground white pepper
- 1 egg white
- 1 1/2 tbsp. cornstarch
- 1 tbsp. plus 3 cups peanut oil
- 1/4 cup chicken stock
- 2 tsp. potato starch, mixed with 1 tbsp. water
- 1/2 tsp. sugar
- 1/4 tsp. white vinegar
- 4 canned water chestnuts, rinsed and halved
- 1/4 lb. snow peas, strings removed
- 3 scallions, white and light green parts only, cut crosswise into 1/3" pieces
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 1" piece ginger, peeled and thinly sliced against the grain
- 1/2 tsp. sesame oil

**1.** To marinate the shrimp: Put shrimp, 1 tbsp. salt, and 2 cups ice-cold water into a large bowl and toss well; drain. Pour 1 cup clean ice-cold water over shrimp and repeat; drain. Pat shrimp and bowl dry; return shrimp to dry bowl. Add 1/4 tsp. salt, 1 tbsp. sherry, 1/8 tsp. pepper, and egg white; mix with your hands until evenly coated and the egg white is dispersed. Add cornstarch and 2 tsp. peanut oil and toss well. Transfer shrimp to another bowl, discarding any marinade that clings to original bowl. Cover and refrigerate.

**2.** Mix remaining sherry, remaining salt, remaining pepper, stock, potato starch, sugar, and vinegar together in a bowl. Set sauce mixture aside.

**3.** Heat 3 cups peanut oil in a wok over medium-high heat until oil reaches 300° on a deep-fry thermometer. Carefully add shrimp and gently stir until shrimp turn white, about 30 seconds. Using a slotted spoon, transfer shrimp to a strainer set over a medium pot. Let oil in wok reach 350°, then add water chestnuts and cook, stirring constantly, for 20 seconds. Add snow peas and cook for 2–3 seconds, then quickly and carefully pour entire contents of wok (vegetables and oil) into the strainer with the shrimp, allowing oil to drain into the pot below; discard oil when cool.

**4.** Wipe out wok and heat remaining peanut oil over high heat. Add scallions, garlic, and ginger and cook, stirring, for 10 seconds. Add reserved sauce mixture; stir constantly until it comes to a boil and thickens, 20–30 seconds. Return shrimp and vegetables to wok and toss quickly. Drizzle with sesame oil and serve immediately.







Brandhurst, who has eaten a goodly quantity of both, finds the differences between the two to be negligible. That doesn't mean, however, that they behave the same way in the wild. White shrimp migrate more quickly than brown shrimp and are thus trickier to find.

White shrimp are what Brandhurst is on the hunt for today, and after nearly an hour of dragging the bottom, he cuts the throttle and raises the net out of the water on the winch. Couture unties a gigantic knot underneath, and the deck is suddenly alive with blue crabs, gray flounder, catfish, and, amid the bycatch, thousands of shrimp, snapping and bouncing like popping corn.

With a wide shovel, Couture moves the entire catch onto a four-by-four-foot sorting table. The bycatch goes overboard, the large shrimp go into an orange plastic basket, and smaller shrimp are sluiced through a chute into another basket. The total take for the first drag? Seven 70-pound baskets, which Couture empties into a fiberglass-and-Styrofoam cooler half the size of a minivan.

In August and September 2005,

## NORTH ATLANTIC TREASURE

**T**he northern pink—a.k.a. Maine—shrimp has a fiercely loyal following among residents of that state. These tiny creatures of the North Atlantic have an uncommonly sweet, concentrated flavor and a tender texture and are one of the only kinds of shrimp that are superb peeled and eaten raw. Maine lobstermen prefer to catch them using traps rather than nets, which can damage the delicate animals. Hard to find outside of Maine, the live shrimp are often hawked for just a couple of dollars a pound out of the backs of pickups. Rob Evans, the chef and owner of Hugo's in Portland, uses Maine shrimp in his version of shrimp and grits. "If I cook the shrimp more than just a little bit I feel like I'm ruining them," he says. "They're that fresh and that delicate." At the restaurant Fore Street, also in Portland, chef Sam Hayward shocks them with a few drops of vinegar, adds a sprinkle of Maine sea salt, and serves them raw or fries them for a few seconds with a dusting of flour. Clam and lobster shacks still serve them the old-fashioned way: coated in batter or bread crumbs and deep-fried. Fisherman Rob Tracy of Five Islands, Maine, fries them in butter and salt, then spoons them into a toasted, buttered hot dog roll. "Oh my God, it's good," he says. —JON LEVITT

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita nearly crushed the local shrimping industry, which had already been reeling from outside competition and increased overhead costs. Those storms demolished docks and levees, sweeping shrimp boats into the adjoining marshes, where many remain like ghost ships in the marsh grass. When Brandhurst made it back to his dock five days after Katrina, he found

the *Four Winds* nearly submerged in nine feet of water, with three holes in its hull. "My business was gone. My home was destroyed," he recalls. "I knew the only salvation I had was this boat." Working from before dawn until dark, interrupting his work only to take shelter from Rita, he got the craft seaworthy and was back on the water by the end of October.

Despite all the aboveground



Above, from left, a knife used to cut rope on the *Four Winds*; weighing Gulf whites; Ray Brandhurst on the deck of the *Four Winds* with a device used to keep turtles out of the nets. Facing page, stir-fried shrimp with snow peas.



## SHRIMP

wreckage, however, the shrimp hadn't been inconvenienced in the least. In fact, the surging seas churned the bottom, releasing more nutrients for the shrimp to eat, oxygenating the water, and ultimately bringing more of the shrimp inshore. Still, Brandhurst estimates that the damages wrought on the industry as a whole will have a long-lasting impact. With his business still severely crippled—no office, no storage facility of his own, a depleted local customer base—he is now selling more of his catch directly to chefs and consumers. He's made two trips to New York since Katrina with the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board in order to meet with chefs there and has set up a website through which he's able to overnight a minimum of 15 pounds to anyone coveting his catch (see *THE PANTRY*, page 92).

THE MECHANICS of each net drag are pretty much the same, though Brandhurst never knows for sure what the waters will offer up. At ten o'clock, he sets the second drag and lights another Kool. An hour later, his nets bring up a steel cable and tree trunks along with less than a hundred pounds of shrimp. The third drag is filled with silver dollar-size porgies, a trash fish, while the fourth is uncommonly muddy. By the time the fifth drag is hauled in, it's been 12 hours since the *Four Winds* sailed through the floodgates. The sun has set, and darkness has brought with it a wave of mosquitoes. Couture sorts through the final catch as Brandhurst pilots the boat back through the gates and up the bayou. The two shrimpers are headed home with about 850 pounds of shrimp in the cooler, a disappointing catch.

Kay, Brandhurst's wife, is waiting on the dock to help the men weigh the shrimp and pack them into boxes. After loading them

into Kay's truck, she drives off to the FedEx office in Jefferson Parish, nearly an hour away. Tomorrow night most of these shrimp will be served at restaurants in Boston and New York. Meanwhile,

Brandhurst and Couture finish up their chores, preparing the boat for the following morning, when they'll head back out into the marshes in the dark hours before dawn. —W.C.

## Part THREE

# HOW TO COOK SHRIMP



**I**N A PERFECT WORLD, I'D ANSWER A CRAVING FOR SHELLFISH BY WANDERING DOWN TO THE DOCK NOT FAR FROM WHERE I LIVE. I'D PURCHASE A FEW POUNDS OF WHOLE, WILD, LIVE NORTH

American shrimp—say, coral-pink spot shrimp or some glistening Gulf whites—directly from the fisherman who'd caught them a few hours before. I'd take them home while they were still squirming and toss them onto a hot grill, cooking them just long enough to hear them sizzle. Then I'd pop off the head and shell and slip one into my mouth, relishing its exquisite taste—a juicy balance of sweetness and brininess.

As is the case for most people, however, shrimp bought right off the boat isn't always in my cards. In fact, the vast majority of shrimp

Whole shell-on, head-on shrimp, like those shown above, can be thrown right on the grill. Facing page, shrimp cocktail.

available for retail sale in this country has been frozen at least once. (See *How to Buy Shrimp*, page 54.) But take heart: today's flash-frozen shrimp is nearly identical in taste and texture to fresh, meaning that the experience of cooking and eating shrimp—and there are many wonderful ways to do both—can almost always be as good as in my reverie.

Shrimp requires blessedly little preparation. Many people like to remove the vein, which is actually part of the animal's digestive tract and contains harmless grit. That

## METHOD

## Shrimp Cocktail

No dish showcases shrimp as simply and elegantly as shrimp cocktail (right). For the sauce, put  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup ketchup, 3 tbsp. drained prepared horseradish, 2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice, 2 tsp. worcestershire sauce, 8–10 drops Tabasco, and a pinch of salt into a medium bowl and stir well. Cover and refrigerate. (For more about cocktail sauce, see page 86.) Put 2 cups white wine, 1 tbsp. black peppercorns, 6 sprigs fresh thyme, 1 small bunch flat-leaf parsley, 1 sliced yellow onion, 1 chopped rib celery, 1 dried bay leaf, and 2 quarts water into a large pot. Season the liquid generously with salt and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 30 minutes. Add 16 jumbo shell-on shrimp (about 1 pound; see page 87 to learn how to devein unpeeled shrimp), such as Gulf of Mexico brown, and cook, stirring occasionally, until just cooked through, 2–3 minutes. Drain shrimp and transfer to a sheet pan and spread into a single layer; let cool to room temperature. Refrigerate shrimp until completely chilled, then peel them. Divide cocktail sauce between 4 cocktail glasses and perch 4 shrimp along the rim of each glass. Serves 4.







can be done while the shell is still on (see the deveining tip on page 87) or as part of the shelling process. When I'm cooking shrimp as finger food, I leave them in their shells—peeling them is half the fun, and cooking them in the shell helps hold in the flavorful juices. But when my guests will be eating them with a fork, I usually peel them before cooking. Some cooks like to splay open, or butterfly, the shrimp, but I consider this mostly cosmetic gesture a vain attempt to improve on nature's perfection.

One of the cardinal virtues of this crustacean is the fact that it cooks in a jiffy—experience has taught

me that it's a lot easier to overcook shrimp than to undercook them. Like lobster and other crustaceans, shrimp contain carotenoid compounds that turn from green-gray

usually a matter of two or three minutes except in the case of really big specimens—they're done.

If the shrimp are out of the shell, I usually cook them over high

heat, in a sauté pan or on a grill, so that the essence of the rapidly evaporating juices clings to the meat. But boiling or simmering whole, shell-on shrimp—the method used in

so many classic dishes, including chowders (see facing page) and other variations of the intensely aromatic broths we inherited from the French—can be equally quick. The key is to add the shrimp only in the final minutes of cooking.

Shrimp have a natural affinity for fat—butter and mayonnaise are bosom companions—and for the tang of citrus, as evidenced by a simple dish like shrimp poached with lemon. They're also just as appealing chilled as they are hot—witness our national love affair with the shrimp cocktail. And there's virtually no part of the animal that is not packed with flavor. The shells can be cooked and puréed for shrimp butter, and I always reserve the heads in the freezer to use later as a base for soups and broths. One of my favorites is a rich, elegant bisque, which I make by sautéing shrimp heads in olive oil, chopping them in a food processor, and simmering them with tomatoes, cream, and a bouquet garni. Strained and then puréed with cooked rice and thinned with broth, the mixture becomes a refined dish for those occasions when you're not eating shrimp fresh off the fire. —JAMES PETERSON, *author of Simply Shrimp, to be published next month by Stewart, Tabori & Chang*

THE PANTRY, page 92: Sources for wild-caught American shrimp and for Zatarain's crab and shrimp boil seasoning.

*There's virtually no part of the shrimp that's not PACKED WITH FLAVOR*

when shrimp are raw to a cheerful pink-orange when heated. Once they're pink on the outside and opaque through and through—

## HOW TO BUY SHRIMP

**FRESH VERSUS FROZEN** Truly fresh shrimp—generally bought directly from the boat—has an incomparably clean, fresh taste, but today's flash-frozen shrimp can be just as good. Whenever possible, buy shrimp that come frozen in blocks, the surest sign they haven't already been thawed and refrozen; refreezing can make the flesh mushy. The shrimp you're most likely to find at your local fish counter, however, has probably been frozen and thawed at least once; when buying thawed shrimp, purchase only as much as you'll cook that day. Finally, don't buy precooked shrimp—some fish markets sell precooked shrimp in order to move less-than-fresh product—except in the case of Pacific pink shrimp, which are often sold cooked.

**CHOOSING THE RIGHT SIZE** Where flavor is concerned, size doesn't matter—a small shrimp should please the palate as much as a big one—though one species can taste quite different from another (see *Know Your American Shrimp*, page 46). Shrimpers and wholesalers, and lately more and more retailers, classify the size of shrimp by assigning them a number that indicates roughly how many individuals make up a pound (Gulf of Mexico whites, for example, range in size from 10/15 to 80/100). In many retail stores, though, shrimp are also sold under the sometimes ambiguous designations medium, large, and jumbo—one store's jumbo may be another store's large. Some cooks follow the rule of thumb that four jumbo, six large, or eight medium shrimp per person are enough for a main course, half that for a starter. But judging by sight is often the best method.

**JUDGING FRESHNESS** Trust your senses: fresh shrimp smell of the ocean, whereas shrimp that's been sitting around for too long tends to smell of ammonia and, in some cases, develops dark blemishes around the base of the head—signs of melanosis, an enzymatic discoloration process similar to the decomposition that causes fruits and vegetables to turn brown. —J.P.







## RECIPE

**Maine Shrimp Chowder**

SERVES 4

Maine chowder differs from other New England chowders in that it's often not thickened with flour. This results in a light soup perfectly suited to delicate Maine shrimp. This dish (left) comes from Sam Hayward, the chef of Fore Street in Portland, Maine, and an all-around champion of Maine's foodways.

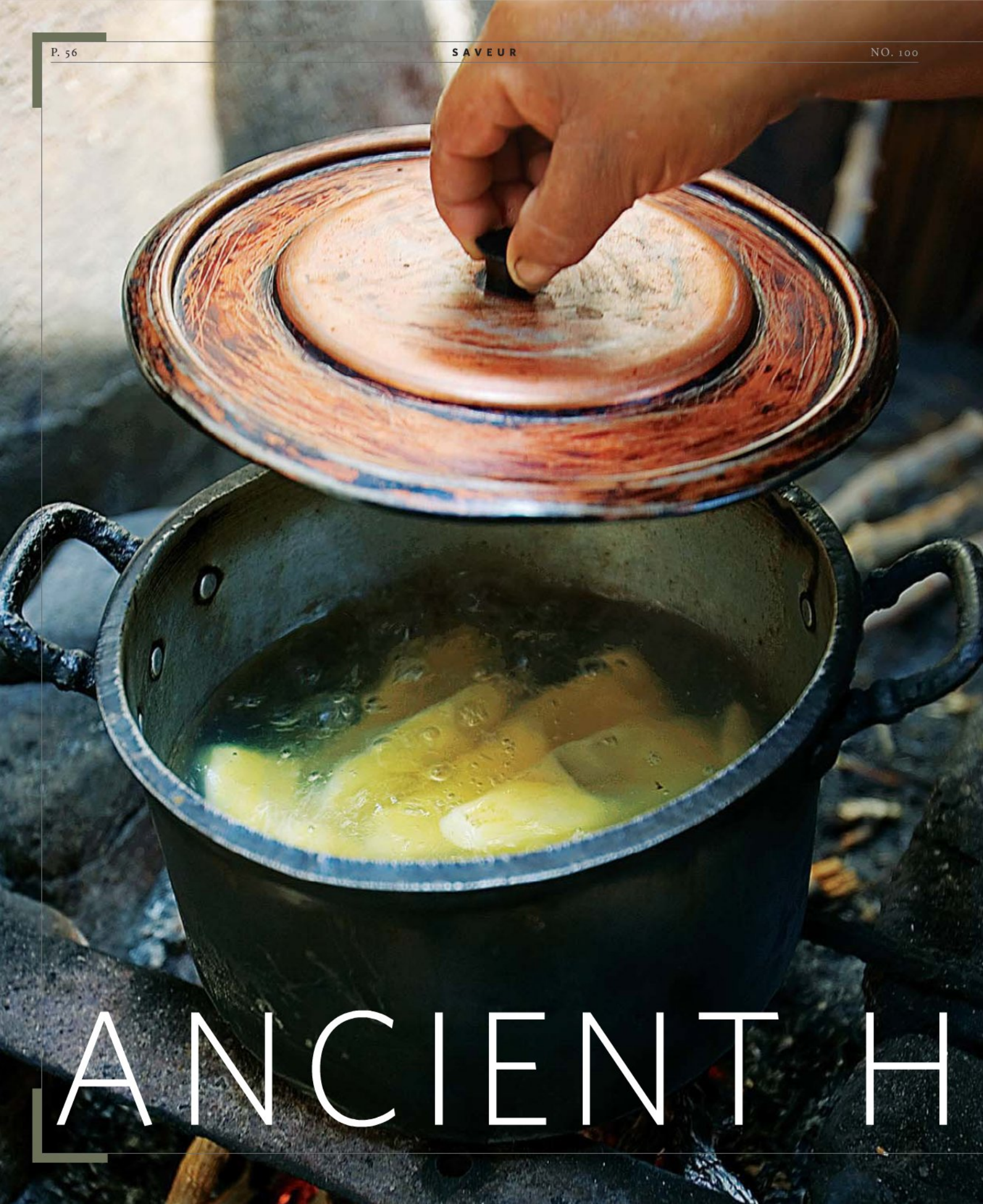
- 3** lbs. shell-on, head-on Maine shrimp
- 1/4** oz. slab bacon, cut into 1/4" pieces
- 3** medium russet potatoes (about 1 pound), quartered lengthwise and sliced crosswise into 1/2" pieces
- 1** large leek, white part only, cut into 1/4" pieces
- 3** tbsp. butter
- 3/4** cup heavy cream
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 1** pinch cayenne pepper
- 2** tsp. snipped chives

**1.** Peel the heads and shells off the shrimp, reserving both for the shrimp broth. (If the shrimp are in the middle of their spawn, says Hayward, clusters of gray eggs may be present that will not adversely affect the broth.) Transfer the shrimp to a bowl, cover, and refrigerate them until the chowder base is completed. Place the shrimp shells and heads in a large pot and add 10 cups cold water. Bring to a simmer over high heat, then reduce to low and gently simmer for 5 minutes, skimming off any foam that rises to the surface. Strain the broth through a fine sieve and set aside.

**2.** Now make the chowder base. Cook the bacon in a small pot of simmering water for 1 minute. Drain. Heat a medium pot over medium heat, add the bacon, and cook, stirring occasionally, until it releases some of its fat. Add potatoes and leeks, stir well, then reduce heat to medium-low and cook, covered, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes. Add 3 cups of the reserved shrimp broth (freeze remainder for another use) and simmer, covered, until potatoes are tender, 8-10 minutes. Remove the chowder base from the heat and cover to keep warm.

**3.** Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Raise the heat to high, add the chilled shrimp and cream, stir well, and bring to a boil. Let boil for 30 seconds. Add the shrimp mixture to the chowder base and stir gently to combine. Cover and let rest for 10 minutes. Season with salt, a generous amount of black pepper, and the cayenne. Ladle into warm soup bowls and sprinkle the chives on top of each.





# ANCIENT H





The vibrant cuisine of northern Peru—with its blend of chiles, corn, yuca, potatoes, and seafood—is rooted in both the Old World and the New

# UNGER



## PERU



## METHOD

**Yuca Hervida**

(Boiled Yuca)

Yuca is as essential to the millions who live in the tropical lowlands of South America as corn is to the people of Central America and Mexico. When encountering the tuber, most Americans don't know where to begin. Here's how to handle it. For more information on yuca, see page 86. With a heavy knife, trim off and discard ends from 2 lbs. of yuca. Cut yuca crosswise into 3"-4" sections with a heavy knife. You will see 2 layers of rind: the rough, dark outer surface and an underskin that is pink on one side and white on the other. With the tip of a small, sharp knife, make several cuts along the length of each section, going deep enough to pierce the pink underskin. To peel yuca, work the tip of the knife under this lower layer to detach it from the flesh until you can remove an entire piece. Pare away any stubborn bits. Split each yuca chunk lengthwise; place in a medium saucepan. If the chunks are particularly thick, cut them into small pieces. Cover yuca generously with salted water; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, stirring occasionally, until a small knife easily slips in and out of the yuca's flesh, about 30 minutes. Remove from heat; keep yuca in the water until ready to serve. Just before serving, drain yuca and remove any thin woody cores. Serve with the Huanchaco-style fish stewed in tomatoes and chiles (see page 60) and the grouper ceviche (see page 64), or on its own. Serves 4.

by MARICEL E. PRESILLA photographs by PENNY DE LOS SANTOS

I AM FLYING FROM LIMA, the capital of Peru, to Trujillo, the country's third-largest city. Below, the coast is a succession of sand dunes and rocky valleys. Every so often, the arid landscape is interrupted by streams that flow down from the mountains and slice through the desert. I can spot patches of green cultivated fields growing not far from their banks. In making the most of this harsh environment, modern coastal Peruvians are following in the footsteps of their ancestors, including the Moche, a pre-Inca civilization that thrived between A.D. 200 and 800.

For years I have been fascinated by the expressive pottery of that civilization—clay portrait vessels and other ceramics featuring representations of flora and fauna—and in 2003 I traveled to the region to visit the Moche Foodways Archaeological Project, a research initiative led by Northern Arizona University's anthropology department to

study the role of food in the development and organization of Moche society. Under the archaeologists' microscopes, I saw fragments of seeds, fish and animal bones, pieces of seaweed, and paper-thin peanut shells—the refuse of ancient kitchens. Holding a tiny corn cob the size of my index finger and knowing that it had once been part of a Moche meal gave me the same thrill I had felt many years before as a medieval-history student in Spain when I first touched a yellowing 13th-century manuscript.

On that trip in 2003 I also encountered extraordinary foods that spoke subtly of the region's past. I ate a wonderful grouper stew, seasoned with tomatoes and chiles, and pristine ceviches (commonly spelled *cebiche* in Peru) made with freshly caught ojo de uva, a white-fleshed Pacific fish, marinated in a blend of lime juice, red onion, and aromatic crushed spicy ají limo chiles. The bright flavors and contrasting textures were balanced

**Previous pages, left, and this page, above, boiled yuca; previous page, right, Rosa Elena Julca, who along with her mother, América Sánchez, cooks for area archaeologists. Below, excavated Moche ruins at the El Brujo complex. Facing page, produce for sale at an outdoor market in Trujillo.**









## PERU

NOW I AM RETURNING, hungry to know more about the people of this region and how they have melded ancient ingredients with European cuisine



A vendor selling grilled chicken feet in the town of Moche, above. Facing page, clockwise from top left: Huanchaco-style fish stewed in tomatoes and chiles; a fisherman tends to his nets in Huanchaquito; traditional Moche reed boats; a woman and her baby in the rice fields of Guadalupe.

by a range of starchy side dishes, among them boiled yuca and cancha (crunchy toasted corn kernels).

Now I am returning, hungry to know more about the people of this region and how they have melded ancient ingredients with the European cuisine brought here by the Spanish. Shortly after I arrive, I make my way to Huanchaco, a fishing village ten miles northwest of Trujillo. I leave my luggage at the hotel and head straight for the beach, a crescent of sand flanked by a pier and a boardwalk. A few fishermen have just come ashore, and I watch them hoist their kayak-size reed boats—called *caballitos de totora*, “little reed horses”, because they seem almost to gallop atop the water—

over their shoulders and prop them against a concrete wall to let them dry. The men are short and strong, and their weathered faces resemble those I have seen depicted on Moche pottery. As I sit on the sand, two other fishermen are just heading out, paddling toward the horizon, their dark silhouettes outlined against the sun.

THE NEXT MORNING I drive from Huanchaco to the archaeological site of El Brujo (The Sorcerer), the location of an ancient Moche political, religious, and ceremonial center, to join César Gálvez, a 49-year-old archaeologist of Moche descent and one of the directors of the El Brujo (*continued on page 65*)

MARICEL E. PRESILLA, a frequent contributor to *SAVEUR*, writes a regular food column for the Miami Herald. She is the author of a comprehensive book about Latin American food that is due out later this year from W. W. Norton & Company.

## RECIPE

## Sudado de Pescado

(Huanchaco-Style Fish Stewed in Tomatoes and Chiles)

SERVES 6

This simple stew (facing page, top left), seasoned with tomato, garlic, onions, and chiles, represents a typical way of preparing fish throughout northern Peru. This version comes from two sources, Miriam Soles, the wife of a fisherman in the village of Huanchaquito, and the Isla sisters, the cooks at Restaurante El Caribe in Huanchaco. Look for fruity aji escabeche chiles at your local Latin market.

- 2 lbs. boneless skinless grouper filets, cut into 6 pieces
- 2 tbsp. fresh lime juice plus 6 lime halves
- 2 tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 8 fresh or frozen aji escabeche (yellow Andean), Holland, or banana chiles (4 seeded and chopped, 4 thinly sliced)
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 4 cloves garlic, mashed to a paste
- 1 medium red onion, halved and cut into 1/2" slices
- 2 large plum tomatoes, cored, seeded, and coarsely chopped
- 1 tsp. dried oregano, lightly toasted in a dry, hot pan
- Boiled yuca (see method, page 58)
- 3" chunks of boiled sweet potatoes (North American yams or Caribbean boniato; optional)

1. Put the grouper, lime juice, cilantro, salt, and pepper into a large bowl; toss gently to combine. Let grouper marinate at room temperature while you continue with the rest of the preparation. Purée the chopped chiles and 1/3 cup water in a blender until smooth. Set the chile purée aside.

2. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, 30 seconds. Carefully add reserved chile purée and cook for 2 minutes. Add onions and cook, stirring constantly, until softened, about 5 minutes. Gently lay grouper filets in skillet, along with marinade and 1 cup hot water, and stir liquid gently to combine. Top filets evenly with remaining chiles and tomatoes and sprinkle with oregano. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, covered, until grouper filets are cooked through, about 15 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Divide grouper filets between 6 shallow bowls, along with the liquid. Serve immediately with lime halves and boiled yuca and sweet potato (if using).









Spicy aji limo chiles for sale, above. Facing page, a vendor of chicha (a fermented corn drink) in a small town north of Trujillo.







## PERU

## RECIPE

**Cebiche de Mero al Estilo de Huanchaco**

(Grouper Ceviche)

SERVES 6

In this dish, from Restaurante El Caribe, in Huanchaco, the fish is cut into irregular strips, not into the cube shape common in most of Peru. Like many northern Peruvian ceviches, the dish is not complete without its starchy sides of piping-hot boiled yuca, sweet potato, and large-kernel Andean white corn (available frozen in some Latin American markets).

**2 lbs. boneless skinless grouper or sole filets**

**Salt**

- 3/4 cup fresh lime juice**
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped fresh cilantro**
- 4 cloves garlic, mashed to a fine pulp**
- 2 fresh or frozen aji limo or serrano chiles, seeded, deveined, and lightly crushed**
- 1 small red onion, halved and cut into 1/8" slices**
- 6 leaves green leaf lettuce**
- 3 sweet potatoes (such as North American yams or Caribbean boniato), cut into 3" chunks and boiled until tender (optional)**
- 6 ears corn, preferably Andean, cut crosswise into 2" chunks and boiled until tender (optional)**

**Boiled yuca (see method, page 58; optional)**

Place the fish in a colander in the sink and rinse under cold running water. Pat dry. Cut each filet in half lengthwise and then cut crosswise on the bias into 1/2"-thick strips. Transfer the fish to a medium bowl; season to taste with salt. Let the fish marinate for 5 minutes. Add the lime juice, cilantro, garlic, chiles, and onions and toss to combine. Place lettuce on 6 plates and use a slotted spoon to divide ceviche and transfer a serving onto each leaf. Serve immediately, with sweet potatoes, corn, and yuca (if using).



Grouper ceviche, top; above, children in the rice fields of Guadalupe. Facing page, top, crushing aji escabeche chiles with a *batán* (stone mortar); bottom, potatoes topped with Andean yellow chile and epazote salsa.



## PERU

## THE MOCHE GREW CHILES, beans, peanuts squashes, corn, and many different fruits—the same foods you find today in markets throughout the region

(continued from page 60) complex. Walking around the grounds with Gálvez, I realize that this place is a kind of living, breathing Rosetta stone, documenting the culinary languages of the past that form the basis of the area's contemporary food culture. Named for the shamans who have traditionally practiced their rituals here, the site is sandwiched between a sugarcane field and the Pacific Ocean, on a low plateau.

Five thousand years of continuous human occupation are chronicled at the site, starting with the pre-ceramic people who lived near the sea by Huaca Prieta, a large earthen mound, and ending with the remains of a 16th-century Dominican church that signals the start of the Spanish colonial period. Two imposing, terraced pyramids—known as Huaca Cortada and Huaca Cao Viejo—frame the northern fringe of the complex. “These are places where several generations of Moche performed religious rituals and buried their nobles and shamans,” says Gálvez.

A huge white canvas covers the northern side of Huaca Cao Viejo to protect its fragile murals, and guards with rifles have orders to

shoot at the tires of any car trying to enter the grounds without permission. The reason for the tight security is the discovery in 2005 of the mummified remains of a young woman who lived here approximately 1,600 years ago. She was found beneath the floor of a room adorned by a long fresco depicting stylized rows of freshwater catfish called *life*, still considered a delicacy in the region.

Gálvez's colleague Lutgarda Reyes, then the director of the National Institute of Culture, in Trujillo, meets up with us and surprises me with an invitation to view the historic find. I don a protective cloth mask and follow her to a makeshift laboratory, where I stare at the mummy. Her long black hair, twisted into two braids, was once covered with tiny silver and gold spiders and scorpions, symbols of mystical power, and her arms bear tattoos of intertwined snakes. Dubbed La Dama de Cao (The Lady of Cao) by the archaeologists, she was laid to rest with a treasure trove of objects that pointed to her high standing in the community. Several neatly stacked boxes contain some of the items found in her funerary bundle: layers of embroidered fabric, necklace beads, weaving tools, and, most significantly, ceremonial war clubs—proof that she held the power of a chieftain or a shaman, which has shattered previously held beliefs about the typical roles played by women in Moche society. To stand in the mummy's presence is a deeply moving experience.

Near the pyramids, George Gumerman IV, the American who heads the Moche Foodways Archaeological Project, and his team have excavated other sites where people lived and were buried. Their findings suggest a complex yet decentralized society with a varied larder. The Moche grew chiles, beans, peanuts, squashes, corn (for cooking and for making chicha, a fermented, sprouted-corn brew), and many different fruits, including guava and lúcuma (a mildly sweet fruit with starchy, yellow flesh)—the same foods you find today in markets throughout the region.

They also consumed deer, llamas, land



## METHOD

### Salsa de Ají Escabeche y Paico

(Andean Yellow Chile and Epazote Salsa)

Dora Asmat, a cook who keeps the archaeologists at Huaca de la Luna well fed, makes this spicy sauce (above, atop potatoes) at her small restaurant Don Merce, in the town of Moche. Asmat cooks outdoors, and the main feature of her kitchen is the *batán* (stone mortar; top) that she inherited from her grandmother. Growing beside it is epazote, an herb most often associated with Mexican cooking; in Peru, it is called paico. Put  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup water, 2 tsp. fresh lime juice, 14 large fresh epazote leaves (see page 92), and 8 seeded deveined chopped fresh or frozen ají escabeche (yellow Andean), Holland, or banana chiles into a blender; purée until smooth. Transfer salsa to a bowl, season with salt to taste, and serve at room temperature spooned, if you like, over halved boiled potatoes (such as yukon gold). Makes about 1 cup.





## THEIR FOOD BEARS TRAITS of Spanish cooking, yet the adobe hearth in their kitchen and the monumental stone mortar in the yard tell a complex story



Detail from a mural on a wall in the Huaca Cao Viejo pyramid at El Brujo, above left; right, a young girl in Guadalupe. Facing page, América Sánchez's chickpea porridge with chile oil.

snails, lizards, crabs, sardines, anchovies, and even sea lions and penguins. It's believed that they cooked stews in earthenware pots and served them in hollowed-out gourds, seasoning them with chicha, wild herbs, tomatillos, and chiles, such as ají escabeche (also known as ají amarillo), a mildly hot, bright orange specimen, and the tiny (and very spicy) ají limo. In a section north of Huaca Prieta, I see the remains of a kitchen with large hearths and jars where chicha was stored for religious ceremonies. That fizzy brew was served as a staple drink and condiment as well as a sacred offering to the dead.

LATER, GÁLVEZ AND I stop by the home of América Sánchez, a stocky 77-year-old, and her 55-year-old daughter Rosa Elena Julca in the nearby village of Magdalena de Cao to offer a gift of fresh purple crabs that I bought on the beach in Huanchaco. The two women will be cooking lunch for me, Gálvez, and others.

Sánchez is like a mother to the researchers at El Brujo. In the mid-1940s she began car-

ing for the children of famed American archaeologist Junius Bird, who was the first to excavate Huaca Prieta, and since then she has made her living cooking for, and nurturing, scientists working in the area. She and her daughter have features, like wide-set brown eyes and full eyebrows, that would blend in anywhere in rural Spain, and their food bears traits of 16th- and 17th-century Spanish cooking, yet the adobe hearth in their kitchen and the monumental *batán* (stone mortar) that sits proudly in the yard tell an even more complex story.

At lunch, we find nearly a dozen plates set out on a table beneath the trees in the backyard. Among them are an earthy stewed goat dish sparked by the acidity of chicha, pollo en escabeche (chicken in a sauce of onion, ají escabeche, and vinegar), and pepián de garbanzos, a chickpea dish resembling polenta, seasoned with tomatoes, onions, and chile oil. Best of all, though, is reventado de cangrejo, "cracked crab," made with the crabs I've provided, served in a sauce of garlic,







# **RECIPE**

## **Pepián de Garbanzos**

(Chickpea Porridge with Chile Oil)

SERVES 6-8

América Sánchez serves this dish—a creamy, smooth chickpea purée drizzled with ají mirasol chile oil—at her house in Magdalena de Cao (which doubles as a hostel). Sánchez grinds the chickpeas to a smooth paste using her stone mortar and pestle, but a food processor also does a good job. Time and patience are required to peel each chickpea by hand, but it is a step that should not be skipped. Serve the polenta-like porridge with beef or goat stew or with any saucy, meaty dish.

- 1/2 lb. dried chickpeas**
- 1/3 cup canola oil**
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped**
- 1 small yellow onion, finely chopped**
- 2 medium plum tomatoes, cored, seeded, and finely chopped**
- Salt**
- 2 whole dried ají mirasol chiles, stemmed and seeded (see page 92)**
- 10 small sprigs fresh cilantro**

**1.** Put the chickpeas into a large bowl and cover them with cold water by a few inches. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let the chickpeas soak at room temperature for 8 hours or overnight.

**2.** Drain the chickpeas and peel each one by pinching and slipping off the skins. Discard the skins. (Alternatively, gently rub the chickpeas, in batches, between 2 kitchen towels to release the skins.) Rinse the chickpeas, then transfer them to a food processor. Add 3/4 cup water and purée the chickpeas until silky and smooth, about 3 minutes. Scrape down the inside of the food processor bowl with a rubber spatula and purée until very silky, about 3 minutes more. Set the chickpea purée aside.

**3.** Heat 3 tbsp. of the oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the garlic and cook, stirring constantly, for 10 seconds. Add the onions and cook until soft, about 5 minutes. Add the tomatoes and continue cooking, stirring occasionally, until the mixture is reduced to a pulp, 5-6 minutes. Add the reserved chickpea purée and cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute. Remove the pot from the heat and slowly whisk in 7 cups hot water until well combined and smooth. Return the pot to medium-low heat and simmer, whisking occasionally, until the mixture thickens and becomes satiny smooth, about 1 hour. Season with salt to taste, then ladle the porridge into a deep bowl and set aside to let firm up.

**4.** Meanwhile, put the chiles into a medium pot, cover with water, and bring to a boil. Boil gently until soft, about 15 minutes. Reserve 2 tbsp. of the cooking water and drain the chiles. Tear the chiles into small pieces. Transfer the chiles and reserved cooking water to a spice grinder or mini food processor and grind the mixture to a paste. Heat the remaining oil in a small skillet over medium heat. Add the chile purée and season with salt to taste. Cook the mixture, whisking constantly, until sizzling, about 1 minute. Drizzle the chile oil over the porridge and garnish with the cilantro sprigs.



## PERU

## THE GUIDE

## PERU

COUNTRY CODE: 51 EXCHANGE RATE:  
3.19 Peruvian nuevos soles = \$1

Dinner with drinks, tax, and tip

EXPENSIVE Over \$20 MODERATE \$10–\$20  
INEXPENSIVE Under \$10

Fly with Lan-Chile or another carrier to Lima, and from there catch a one-hour flight with Lan-Peru to Trujillo's Capitán Carlos Martínez de Pinillos airport.

## WHERE TO STAY

**HOSTAL BRACAMONTE** *Jirón Los Olivos 503, Huanchaco (44 461 266; www.hostalbracamonte.com). Rates: \$28–\$37 double.* Located just outside Huanchaco, a short walk from the beach where you can see area fishermen at work, this hotel has a small pool, Internet service, and the friendliest staff in town.

**LIBERTADOR PLAZA MAYOR TRUJILLO** *Jirón Independencia 485, Trujillo (44 23 2741; www.libertador.com.pe). Rates: \$155 double; \$210 suite.* A luxury hotel that faces the gorgeous plaza de Armas, this is Trujillo's grande dame, the place where politicians and businessmen stay. Rooms with balconies provide excellent views of the city's cathedral.

## WHERE TO EAT

**CASA DE AMÉRICA SÁNCHEZ** *Templo 751, Magdalena de Cao (no phone). Lunch, by appointment only. Inexpensive.* A short walk from the colonial church in Magdalena de Cao, the village closest to El Brujo, América Sánchez and her daughter Rosa Elena Julca will cook and serve you lunch in their home, which doubles as a hostel. Stop by early in the morning to select your menu, and enjoy regional specialties under the trees in the backyard.

**RESTAURANTE EL CARIBE** *Atahualpa 101, Huanchaco (no phone). Inexpensive.* Owned by sisters Margot and María Jesús Verna Isla, El Caribe is a homey storefront restaurant just half a block from Huanchaco's beach. Here you can taste some of the town's most popular dishes, including wonderful ceviches.

## AS I SIT ON THE SAND, two fishermen are just heading out, paddling toward the horizon, their dark silhouettes outlined against the sun

red onion, ají escabeche, cumin, lime juice, and mococho, a lacy seaweed. Together we toast La Dama de Cao with chicha de año, a sweet, aged alcoholic drink that tastes like muscatel.

It is not hard to detect the European influence in this meal. At the heart of many dishes is aderezo, a Spanish-style sautéed mixture of garlic, chopped onions, chiles, oil, and herbs, similar to sofrito. There are other old-world touches, too, such as the use of legumes like chickpeas, the reliance on vinegar and citrus juices to provide balance, and the love of sweet alcoholic beverages.

Evidence of the Moche legacy in this food is more subtle yet runs deeper: for example, the heat of the chiles and the briny, marine essence of seaweed, which imparts a kind of umami to the crab. I recall a giant *batán* that I spotted at El Brujo, nearly identical to the one in Sánchez's home.

At one of the El Brujo digs I also noticed a *lapa*, a squat, wide bowl made from a hollowed-out gourd. It was the same kind of vessel in which Dora Asmat, a cook from the town of Moche, a few days later, prepares and serves her *causa en lapa*, a traditional Good Friday dish of yellow potato purée topped with boiled salted mackerel and a zesty chile garlic sauce with red onions and purple olives. Asmat also uses a *batán* to grind epazote and ají escabeche for a simple but delicious salsa that is served over potatoes.

This kind of mixing of traditions is a defining aspect of the region's cuisine. "When Pizarro founded Trujillo, in 1534, there were no separate Indian neighborhoods; Spaniards and Indians lived side by side," notes Juan Castañeda, a food historian at Trujillo's National University, whom I meet one evening. "The native people received the Spaniards as liberators from the Inca. This explains why the mingling of cultures, particularly in cooking, took place at a faster pace here than in other regions."

THE MOCHE LIVE ON, not only in the techniques of area cooks but also in the way that people here draw sustenance directly from nature and in the work of the local fishermen. To see how the Moche farmed the sea centuries ago, one need only walk to a tiny fishing village near Huaca Prieta, where one morning I watched as a group of women, fully dressed to shield themselves against the frigid waters, waded in up to their waists to grab seaweed and catch small fish and crabs with their bare hands.

In talking to Leoncio Carrión, the last of a long line of shamans who have traditionally performed their ceremonies at El Brujo, I am aware that people here have a profound understanding of their physical environment. Carrión can predict the coming of El Niño and La Niña by examining the behavior of plants and animals, and the site's archaeologists regularly consult with him on such matters. On the moonlit night before I leave, he performs a "flowering" ceremony for me—a traditional ritual designed to channel the elements of nature and the positive energy within a person to help him overcome negative forces—at the base of the Cerro Cuculicote, a sacred mountain in the Chicama Valley. He carefully arranges various objects on a piece of fabric set on the ground between ceremonial staffs. This is the ritual *mesa* (literally, table) for the spirit world, and the objects' configuration represents the Moche cosmos and the duality of male and female that is mirrored in the layout of the twin Moche pyramids at El Brujo.

The shaman imbibes a brew made from a hallucinatory cactus, similar to peyote, to reach a state of altered consciousness. He chants in unison with the sound of maracas, sprays perfume from his mouth over those of us who have gathered here, and invokes our surroundings: the dark sky, the howling wind, the hallowed mountain above us, the burial ground on which we stand, and the spirits of another time. 

THE PANTRY, page 92: Sources for fresh epazote and whole dried ají mirasol chiles.





A Huanchaco fisherman about to set out for a night of crab fishing in his reed boat.









# THE Glory *of* RED Cooking

This traditional **Chinese cooking method** yields melt-in-your-mouth results

*By Grace Young   Photographs by Ben Fink*



## RED COOKING

**I**CAN STILL RECALL the anticipation that I felt as a child when my mother made red-cooked pork belly. The dish was a special treat in our Chinese-American household in San Francisco, and its fragrance filled the house, teasing my taste buds before it was ready to be devoured. I loved covering my bowl of rice with spoonfuls of the succulent meat in its mahogany sauce and then holding it to my face to breathe in the aroma up close. The pork belly (see page 86), braised until it was falling-apart tender, was layered with flesh and smooth, rich fat. Long after my stomach was full, I would linger at the table wanting more. Although I was seldom an avid eater of rice, I could easily consume bowl after bowl of it when it was served with that magnificent dish.

Red cooking (the Mandarin term is *hong shao*) is largely unknown to most Westerners, and it produces foods that couldn't be more different from the crisp, lightly cooked stir-fries most often associated with Chinese cuisine. In red cooking, the main ingredient—often pork, chicken, beef, duck, tofu, wheat gluten (see page 86), or freshwater fish, such as carp—is simmered over a low flame (sometimes after it's been briefly seared or blanched) in dark soy sauce and rock sugar, often with rice wine and stock, and aromatics such as ginger, scallions, star anise, and cinnamon. Although the textures and flavors are different, this method yields profoundly soothing dishes that are akin to pot roast in the American culinary repertoire.

The phrase “red cooking” is a bit of a misnomer in English, since the soy sauce in all such dishes produce a brownish hue rather than a red one, but the name derives partly from the fact that the Chinese consider red an auspicious color. Just as in a dish of braised short ribs or veal stew, the braising liquid works with the low, slow heat to transform the texture of the ingredients until they are meltingly tender. (In the case of meat and poultry, some of their fat is also rendered, which adds richness.) Dark soy sauce, which typically contains molasses, is thicker and sweeter than regular soy sauce but still imparts umami notes. The result is a complex liquid that penetrates the ingredients and imbues them with its

## RECIPE

**Si Xi Kaufu**

(Four Happiness Wheat Gluten)

SERVES 4

Spongy, meaty-textured wheat gluten (see IN THE SAVEUR KITCHEN, page 86) easily absorbs the flavors of the ingredients it is cooked with. Look for this vegetarian standby at your local Asian market.

- 4 pieces dried wood ear mushrooms (about 1½ oz.; see page 92)
- 16 medium dried Chinese black mushrooms (about 1 oz.; see page 92)
- 3 tbsp. peanut oil
- 1 lb. frozen spongy wheat gluten, thawed and torn into 1"-2" pieces
- ⅓ cup shelled skin-on peanuts
- 2 tbsp. dark soy sauce
- 2 tbsp. sugar
- 12 small sprigs cilantro (optional)

**1.** Put wood ear mushrooms into a medium bowl, cover with cold water, and weight down with a small plate. Let soften for 1 hour. Drain and rinse. Trim off and discard any hard spots, then cut into 1" pieces; set aside. Meanwhile, put black mushrooms into a medium bowl, cover with 1½ cups cold water, and weight down with a small plate. Let soften for 30 minutes. Strain black mushrooms, reserving liquid. Squeeze black mushrooms dry, trim off and discard stems, then cut into 1" pieces; set aside. Measure reserved black mushroom soaking liquid and add enough water to make 2 cups total. Strain through a fine sieve to remove any grit and set aside.

**2.** Heat a 14" flat-bottomed wok over high heat. Swirl in oil, add wheat gluten, and cook, stirring constantly, until oil is absorbed, about 5 seconds. Add peanuts, soy sauce, sugar, mushrooms, and mushroom liquid, cover, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and cook, covered, stirring occasionally, until most of the liquid has been absorbed, about 10 minutes. Serve hot, at room temperature, or chilled, garnished with cilantro (if using).

concentrated flavor. Red-cooked foods are often called “rice-sending dishes” because their sauces are said to stimulate the appetite for rice—a theory corroborated by my childhood response to my mother’s red-cooked pork belly.

Although variations on *hong shao* exist throughout China (in Sichuan and Hunan provinces, red-cooked dishes are sparked by the addition of fiery chile bean paste or dried chiles), it is a cooking style primarily linked with Shanghai and other cities in Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces, in the eastern part of the country, known for the premium quality of their soy sauce and rice wine. Other regions of the country also make red-cooked dishes, as well as unrelated ones that call for braising, but not all foods simmered in soy sauce are considered *hong shao*. In Cantonese cooking, there are recipes, such as the one for *lu shui er* (soy sauce-braised goose), in which the ingredients are poached in a soy sauce-rich master sauce, or *lu*. Each time a *lu* dish is made, the leftover poaching sauce

## METHOD

**Hong Shao Yu**

(Red-Cooked Fish)

A typical red-cooked dish requires a long period of simmering to harmonize the flavors, but most red-cooked seafood gets a more streamlined treatment. For *hong shao yu* (previous page, left), heat a 14" flat-bottomed wok over medium-high heat. Swirl in 2 tbsp. peanut oil; add 1 cleaned whole carp or sea bass (about 1 lb.). Cook, turning once, until golden, 1-2 minutes per side. Transfer fish to a plate. Add 1 bunch scallions trimmed into 7" pieces and 1" piece ginger sliced into “coins” to wok and stir-fry until scallions begin to wilt, 20-30 seconds. Add ¾ cup water, ¼ cup shaoxing jiu (Chinese rice wine; see page 92), ¼ cup dark soy sauce, and 3 tbsp. sugar; bring to a boil. Return fish to wok, cover, and reduce heat to medium-low; simmer until cooked through, 7-10 minutes. Transfer fish to a platter and arrange scallions on top. Increase heat to high; boil liquid until reduced and thickened, 8-10 minutes. Pour sauce over fish. Serves 4.

GRACE YOUNG is a *SAVEUR* consulting editor and the author of *The Wisdom of the Chinese Kitchen* (Simon & Schuster, 1999).











## RED COOKING

is saved for future use, simmered each day, and refreshed with additional soy sauce, rice wine, and spices, developing an unusual depth of flavor from repeated use over decades. A Shanghaiese cook, on the other hand, would never consider reusing the sauce from a hong shao dish.

Some Shanghaiese red-cooking recipes date back several centuries, but like other aspects of life in the city, Shanghai's food also bears the mark of foreign traders and other visitors who helped make its port a thriving center of commerce in Asia. Over the years, various cooks have incorporated Western ingredients like ketchup, as well as staples from other parts of China, like oyster sauce from Guangdong.

**A**CCORDING TO Florence Lin, an expert on Chinese cooking and Shanghaiese cuisine in particular, red cooking was traditionally part of the repertoire of nearly every home cook in the region—even during periods when some foods were hard to come by. During the 1930s and '40s, a time of great political and cultural upheaval, she says, “you felt lucky if you had a little red-cooked pork to flavor your two bowls of rice”. That meant you could afford soy sauce and meat, which many people couldn't. Prior to the arrival of refrigeration, whatever was not eaten at dinner could be kept in a cold place and saved for the following day, when the flavors had melded further.

Because they tend to be rich and hearty, red-cooked dishes are often paired with lighter accompaniments, such as stir-fried vegetables. Traditionally, they are served during the cooler months of the year, when a wok gently bubbling on the stove, warming your kitchen and suffusing it with a host of tempting scents, creates a heavenly atmosphere. Many hong shao dishes simmer for a long time, but, after all, some of life's pleasures are worth the wait. 🍴

*THE PANTRY, page 92: Sources for Chinese rice wine, dried wood ear mushrooms, dried Chinese black mushrooms, mushroom-flavored soy sauce, dried citrus peel, and Chinese rock sugar.*

## METHOD

**Hong Shao Rou**

(Red-Cooked Pork Belly)

With its intense flavor and the smooth, fatty texture of the meat, hong shao rou (facing page) is one of the most classic red-cooked dishes. Put 2 lbs. boneless skinless pork belly (see page 86) cut into 1½" chunks into a pot and cover with water; bring to a boil. Uncover and cook for 2 minutes; drain and rinse. Heat 2 tbsp. peanut oil in a 14" flat-bottomed wok over high heat. Add a 2" piece ginger cut into "coins" and 10 scallions cut into 3" pieces and stir-fry for 10 seconds. Add the pork belly and stir-fry for 1 minute. Add ¼ cup shaoxing jiu (Chinese rice wine; see page 92); stir-fry until it begins to brown, 2–3 minutes. Add 5 tbsp. mushroom-flavored dark soy sauce (see page 92) and cook until absorbed, 2–3 minutes. Add 1 tsp. salt and 2 cups water; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, covered, stirring occasionally, until pork is just tender, about 1 hour. Uncover wok, stir in 3 tbsp. sugar, and cook until liquid has thickened slightly, 12–14 minutes. Serves 4.

## RECIPE

**Hong Shao Ji**

(Red-Cooked Chicken)

SERVES 4

Let hong shao ji (below) sit for 15 minutes before serving to allow the flavors to meld. For sources for Chinese ingredients, see *THE PANTRY*, page 92.

- 1 3½-lb. chicken, backbone removed
- 1 cup shaoxing jiu (Chinese rice wine)
- ½ tsp. salt
- 3 scallions, roughly chopped
- 1 2" piece ginger, peeled and cut into "coins"
- 3 tbsp. peanut oil
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 3 whole star anise
- 2 fresh green or red thai chiles, stemmed and chopped
- 1 3" cinnamon stick
- 1 3" piece dried tangerine peel or other citrus peel, softened in warm water
- ¼ cup mushroom-flavored dark soy sauce
- 3 tbsp. roughly chopped Chinese rock sugar
- ½ tsp. cornstarch

**1.** Using a cleaver, chop chicken into 2" bone-in pieces. In a bowl, combine chicken, shaoxing jiu, salt, scallions, and ginger. Let marinate at room temperature for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Drain; reserve chicken, scallions, and ginger.

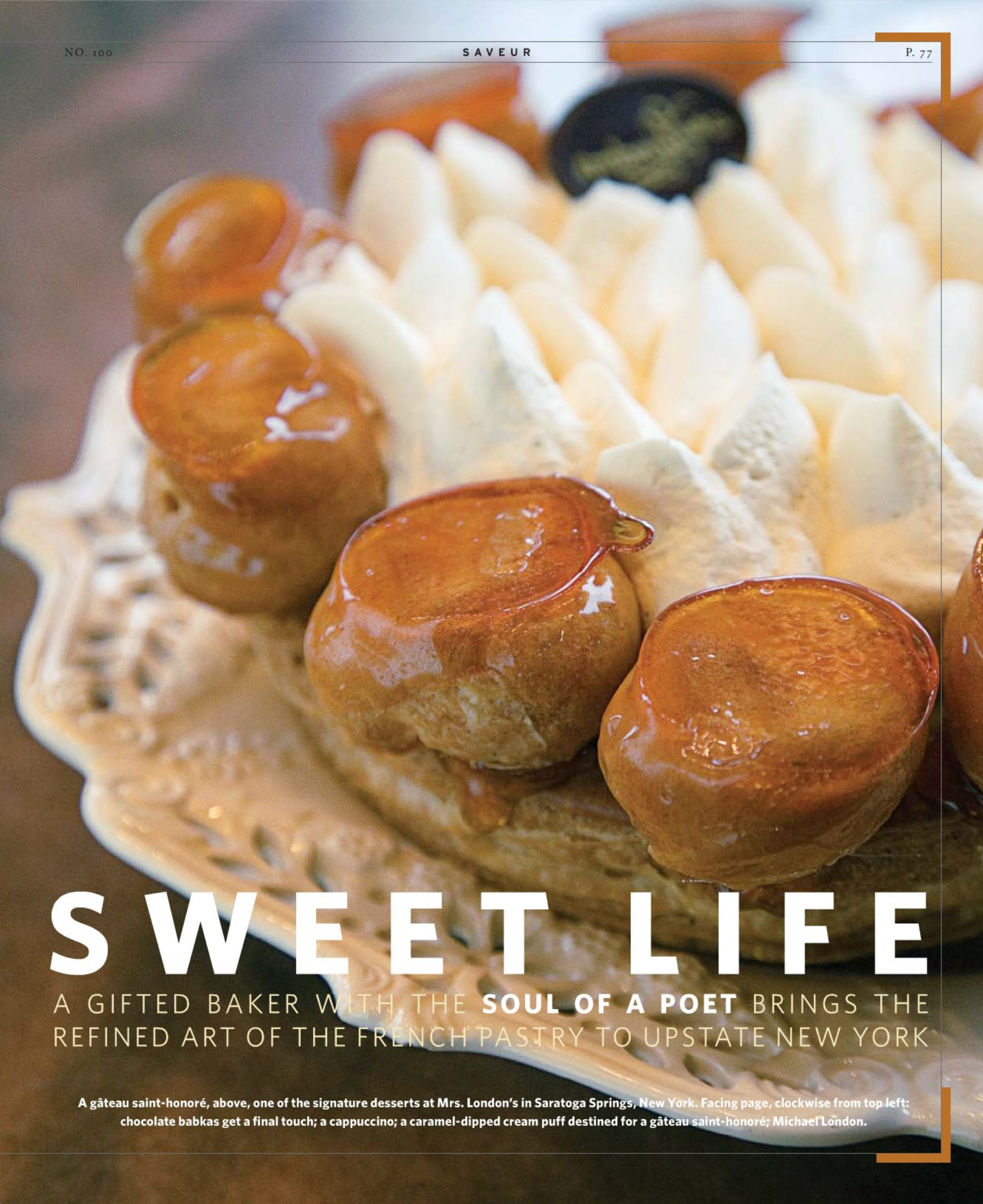
**2.** Heat a 14" flat-bottomed wok over high heat. Swirl in oil and add garlic, star anise, chiles, cinnamon, and tangerine peel and cook for 30 seconds. Add chicken, scallions, and ginger and cook until lightly golden, about 8 minutes. Add soy sauce and cook for 1 minute. Add 1½ cups water and cover; bring to a boil. Lower heat to medium and simmer, covered, until chicken is tender, about 20 minutes. Uncover, add sugar, and cook until dissolved, 1–2 minutes. Stir together cornstarch with 1 tbsp. cold water in a small bowl. Raise heat to high and pour in cornstarch mixture while stirring constantly. Cook, stirring, until sauce has thickened, about 4 minutes. Remove from heat and let rest for 15 minutes.











# SWEET LIFE

A GIFTED BAKER WITH THE **SOUL OF A POET** BRINGS THE REFINED ART OF THE FRENCH PASTRY TO UPSTATE NEW YORK

A gâteau saint-honoré, above, one of the signature desserts at Mrs. London's in Saratoga Springs, New York. Facing page, clockwise from top left: chocolate babkas get a final touch; a cappuccino; a caramel-dipped cream puff destined for a gâteau saint-honoré; Michael London.



## SARATOGA BAKER

## RECIPE

## Gâteau Saint-Honoré

MAKES ONE 8" CAKE

This dessert—named after a seventh-century bishop who became the patron saint of bakers—is an adaptation of one made at Mrs. London's.

|                                         |                                    |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>3/4 lb. chilled puff pastry</b>      | <b>2 eggs plus 3 egg yolks</b>     |
| <b>2 3/4 cups plus 6 1/2 tsp. sugar</b> | <b>Seeds from 1 vanilla bean</b>   |
| <b>1 1/4 cups plus 2 tbsp. milk</b>     | <b>1 1/2 tbsp. cornstarch</b>      |
| <b>3 1/2 tbsp. butter</b>               | <b>1 1/2 cups cold heavy cream</b> |
| <b>1/4 tsp. salt</b>                    | <b>1/2 tbsp. canola oil</b>        |
| <b>1/2 cup plus 1 tbsp. flour</b>       | <b>6 tbsp. corn syrup</b>          |

**1.** Roll out pastry until 1/8" thick, pressing down hard on the rolling pin (which will prevent the pastry from puffing when baked). Cut out an 8" pastry circle; transfer to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet pan. (Discard scraps.) Cover pastry circle with plastic wrap and refrigerate.

**2.** Heat oven to 425°. Bring 1/2 tsp. sugar, 1/4 cup milk, butter, salt, and 1/4 cup water to a boil in a small pot. Add 1/2 cup flour and cook, stirring, until it forms into a dough ball, about 20 seconds. Transfer dough to a bowl. Add 2 eggs, one at a time, while beating with an electric mixer; continue beating until dough is smooth and holds a soft peak. Transfer dough to a pastry bag fitted with a 3/8" round tip and pipe 3 circles onto the chilled pastry circle: one along the outer edge, one around the middle, and one in the center. On another parchment paper-lined baking sheet, pipe remaining dough into twelve 1"-wide puffs (they'll resemble little peaked caps). Press down the pointy tops with a moist fingertip. Bake pastry circle and puffs until beginning to brown, 12–14 minutes. Reduce heat to 325°; bake until dryish and golden, 6–7 minutes for puffs, 10–12 minutes for pastry. Let the pastry circle and puffs cool.

**3.** Heat remaining milk, half the vanilla, and 3 1/2 tbsp. sugar in a small pot over medium heat until it starts to bubble around the edges. Meanwhile, beat together egg yolks and 2 tbsp. sugar in a medium bowl until pale and thick; sift in remaining flour and cornstarch and whisk to combine. Slowly drizzle in hot milk mixture while whisking constantly. Strain through a fine sieve into a small pot; cook over medium-low heat until very thick to make a pastry cream, 8–10 minutes. Cover and chill the pastry cream.

**4.** Beat remaining vanilla beans and heavy cream to soft peaks in a large bowl. Add 1/2 tbsp. sugar; beat to stiff peaks. Transfer 2 cups whipped cream to a bowl, cover, and reserve in the refrigerator. Fold remaining whipped cream into the chilled pastry cream in 2 batches. Transfer the cream mixture to a pastry bag fitted with a very small, round tip. Poke bottom of each pastry puff once with a toothpick to make a small hole; pipe cream mixture into each puff to fill. Pipe the remaining cream onto the pastry, leaving the outer ring exposed, and chill.

**5.** Grease a sheet pan with the canola oil. Bring remaining sugar, corn syrup, and 3/4 cup plus 2 tbsp. water to a boil in a small pot over medium heat. Cook syrup, without stirring, until golden brown, about 40 minutes. Plunge the pot into cold water to stop the cooking, being careful not to get water in the pot. Working with metal tongs, quickly dip each puff into the caramel to coat all over; then transfer to the sheet pan, puffed side up. Let harden. Reheat caramel, then dip the end of each puff, puffed side down, briefly into the caramel and adhere them to the outer ring of the pastry circle, pressing them down to ensure that they stick. Transfer reserved whipped cream to a pastry bag fitted with a saint-honoré tip (see page 92); pipe cream onto center of pastry in a herringbone pattern, with the notch of the tip facing up. Serve immediately or chill until ready to serve.

BY DARRA GOLDSTEIN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

**M**ICHAEL LONDON, the 63-year-old owner of Mrs. London's, a bakery in Saratoga Springs, New York, likes to tell the story of a high point in his professional life. After putting some of his creations in the window of his shop, he noticed two teenage girls peering through the glass at some luscious pistachio bavarians set on a sablé breton. The domes of pastry had been so luxuriously enrobed in a mixture of cocoa butter and chocolate that they appeared to be upholstered in velour. The girls stared and stared. "That is *so* fake!" one finally exclaimed, with the kind of petulant skepticism that only a teenager could muster. No matter that those bavarians were filled with a delectable jelled raspberry coulis. They looked too perfect to be real.

I remember this anecdote as I stand outside Mrs. London's—so named in honor of London's wife of 30 years, Wendy—peering just as those girls did through the shopwindow, marveling at the spectacle of jewel-like beauty. When I discovered the bakery, ten years ago, I thought for a moment that I'd died and gone to Paris. In one corner there was a fraiser, a pale pistachio mousseline with scarlet strawberries nestled on top. Next to it sat a gâteau basque, a rum-infused cake filled with rich pastry cream and cherry preserves. Nearby was something called a beret saint-tropez, a playful deconstruction of the classic tarte tropézienne, consisting of a beret-shaped brioche filled with a kirsch- and orange flower-water-flavored cream. How, I wondered, had these treasures ended up in this upstate town, whose glory days lay back in the late 19th century, when the Rockefellers and Vanderbilts refreshed themselves at its famous mineral springs and indulged in horse racing?

The answer to that question represents the culmination of Michael London's life story, which is itself as improbable as a Parisian pâtisserie's landing on the shores of Saratoga Lake. He may be the only baker alive as conversant in the form and structure of verse as of dough. A cofounder of the influential literary review *Salmagundi*, he served as its poetry editor from 1965 to 1970 before deciding that what he really wanted to do was bake. Today London has firmly established his reputation as a true poet of pastry, and now he has in some ways come full circle, handing over much of the pastry making to his own, gifted lead baker, Tim Hangarter, as London himself prepares for new endeavors.

Michael London may have left the rarefied world of poetry for the production line of bakeshop kitchens, but he has kept his sense of aesthetics intact. Who else would compare a croissant to the poetry of Wallace Stevens? One of the first things London told me was that the

**WHEN I DISCOVERED MRS. LONDON'S, A DECADE AGO, I THOUGHT I HAD DIED AND GONE TO PARIS**

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The display case at Mrs. London's includes an elaborate pas de deux cake (top center) and fresh fruit tarts (lower left).



*Mrs. London's*



*Breads \* Pastries*



## SARATOGA BAKER



A lemon meringue tart, above, from Mrs. London's; facing page, the exterior of the bakery, in downtown Saratoga Springs, New York.

two have a lot in common: elegance, restraint, mastery, and exquisite taste. You don't have to be a lover of Wallace Stevens, though, to grasp the aesthetic parallels when you sample one of London's creations.

MICHAEL LONDON DOESN'T EXAGGERATE when he says that the phrase most often heard in his shop is "Where do I begin?" As I entered Mrs. London's on that first visit, reveling in the beauty of the baked goods and of the bakery itself—its burnished mirrors, antique baker's racks, and marble-topped tables, its sideboard from Saratoga's once grand Grand Union Hotel, and the chandeliers used in the 1997 Steven Spielberg movie *Amistad*—I was wonder struck. And I quickly learned that the flavors of Mrs. London's pastries were as exceptional as their outward appeal.

On my current visit, I start with the kouing-aman, a sweet "butter bread" from Brittany (the name means bread and butter in the Breton language)—no doubt one of the reasons the bakery goes through nearly 360 pounds of butterfat-rich Plugrá butter a week during the summer high season. Then I move on to the cannelés, fluted cylinders that greet the tongue with a crisp, deeply caramelized exterior that yields to a toothsome cake within. After that, I deliberate between the lemon meringue tart, a buttery pastry shell filled with lemon cream and topped with a fanciful Italian meringue, and Mrs. London's signature nebula, an ethereally light dome of dark and milk chocolate mousses resting on a flourless chocolate sponge base, all covered in swirls of chocolate. I end up trying both.

London's approach to pastry making is what he calls "neoclassic". In

## RECIPE

## Lemon Meringue Tart

MAKES ONE 8" TART

The flowerlike swirl that crowns this tart is easy to create if you pipe the meringue through a saint-honoré pastry tip (see page 92), which has a V notch cut into it. This sweet is an adaptation of one made at Mrs. London's.

|                                                      |                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| $\frac{3}{4}$ cup flour                              | 1 egg plus 5 egg whites and 4 egg yolks           |
| 2 tbsp. almond flour (see page 92)                   | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup plus 1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice  |
| $\frac{1}{4}$ cup confectioners' sugar               | $2\frac{1}{4}$ cups sugar                         |
| Seeds scraped from $\frac{1}{2}$ vanilla bean        | 1 tbsp. plus 2 tsp. cornstarch                    |
| Pinch of salt                                        | Thin slice of fresh or candied lemon, for garnish |
| 13 tbsp. cold butter, cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ " cubes |                                                   |

**1.** Sift flours, confectioners' sugar, vanilla, and salt into the bowl of a standing mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Add  $4\frac{1}{2}$  tbsp. butter; mix on low until mixture has a sandy texture. Add egg and mix just until a dough forms. Shape dough into a disk, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate until firm, about 1 hour.

**2.** Heat oven to 350°. Grease an 8" fluted tart ring with a removable bottom (see page 92) with  $\frac{1}{2}$  tbsp. butter. Working on a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 10" circle. Lay dough in tart ring and press it in to cover the bottom and sides. Trim off overhanging dough; prick the bottom all over with a fork. Cover the tart shell with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Line tart shell with parchment paper, fill with dried beans or pie weights, and bake until the edges are lightly browned, about 15 minutes. Remove beans and parchment paper and bake until bottom is cooked through, 12–14 minutes more. Let the tart shell cool.

**3.** In a small pot, combine remaining butter, lemon juice, and  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar. Heat over medium heat until bubbles form around the edges. Meanwhile, whisk 1 egg white, yolks, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar in a large bowl until thick and pale, then whisk in the cornstarch. Drizzle hot lemon mixture into egg mixture while whisking constantly; strain through a fine sieve into a small pot. Cook lemon-egg mixture over medium heat, stirring constantly, until it's as thick as pudding, to make a lemon curd, about 10 minutes. Strain the lemon curd into a bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and chill in the refrigerator. Transfer chilled curd to the tart shell and smooth out to cover the bottom. Refrigerate the tart.

**4.** Heat  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water in a small pot over medium heat, without stirring, until it reaches 248° on a deep-fry thermometer (the firm ball stage) to make a syrup. Meanwhile, beat the remaining egg whites in a large bowl with an electric mixer until foamy. Add the remaining sugar and beat to soft peaks. Carefully drizzle the hot syrup into whites while beating constantly to make a meringue. Continue beating the meringue until completely cool.

**5.** Heat oven to 475°. Fill a pastry bag fitted with a saint-honoré tip (see page 92) with the cooled meringue. Pipe the meringue onto the tart, with the notch of the tip facing up, in a fan pattern, starting from the outside edge of the tart and working inward. Bake the tart until the top of the meringue is just lightly browned, about 2 minutes. Garnish the center with the lemon slice and refrigerate until chilled.



## SARATOGA BAKER

## RECIPE

## Chocolate Babka

MAKES TWO 8" LOAVES

This classic eastern European dessert—a version of one served at Mrs. London's—is the ultimate coffee-break indulgence.

|        |                                                    |       |                                                                      |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2      | 7-gram packages active dry yeast                   |       | melted, 4 tbsp. chilled and diced)                                   |
| 1/2    | cup milk                                           | 3     | oz. almond paste (about 1/3 cup), broken into pieces                 |
| 1 3/4  | cups plus 2/3 cup flour                            | 2     | cups sponge cake crumbs                                              |
| 1      | cup sugar                                          | 1     | tsp. cinnamon                                                        |
| 1/2    | tbsp. plus a pinch of salt                         | 3/4   | cup seedless raisins, plumped in boiling water and drained           |
| 1      | tsp. each finely grated orange zest and lemon zest | 1 1/2 | tbsp. dark rum                                                       |
| 1      | tsp. vanilla extract                               | 1/2   | lb. chocolate (preferably 55-72 percent cocoa), melted and kept warm |
| 7      | egg yolks plus 1 egg white and 1 egg               |       |                                                                      |
| 15 1/2 | tbsp. butter (11 1/2 tbsp.                         |       |                                                                      |

**1.** Whisk together yeast and milk in the bowl of a standing mixer until dissolved. Add 3/4 cup flour and beat on slow speed with paddle attachment; increase speed to medium-high and beat for 3 minutes. Cover with plastic wrap and let rise in a very warm spot until doubled in volume, about 1 hour. Add 1 1/3 cups flour, 1/2 cup sugar, 1/2 tsp. salt, zests, 1/2 tsp. vanilla, and yolks to dough. Beat on slow speed to combine; increase speed to medium and mix until dough pulls away from paddle, then increase to high and beat for 2 minutes. Reduce to low and drizzle in 8 tbsp. melted butter in 3 batches, waiting between additions until it's absorbed; beat until combined. Increase to high; beat for 3 minutes more. Cover bowl and let rise in a very warm spot until doubled in volume, about 2 hours. Punch down dough with floured hands; turn out onto a parchment paper-lined sheet pan dusted with flour; dust top of dough with flour. Slip pan into a garbage bag and tie tightly; chill overnight.

**2.** Beat almond paste and egg white in a bowl with an electric mixer until combined. Add crumbs, 1/2 tbsp. melted butter, and 1/4 cup water; beat until combined. Cover and set filling aside. Stir together remaining flour, 1/4 cup sugar, and 1/2 tsp. cinnamon in a bowl. Add diced butter and remaining vanilla; beat just until crumbly. Cover and chill streusel. Grease two 2 1/4" x 4" x 8" loaf pans with a little of the remaining melted butter. Combine raisins and rum in a bowl; then combine remaining sugar and cinnamon in another bowl. Whisk together remaining salt, 1 egg, and 2 tsp. water in a bowl to make an egg wash.

**3.** Halve chilled dough. On a floured surface, roll out each dough piece to a 6" x 14" rectangle (long sides parallel to you). Brush with egg wash; divide and spread half of the filling over each, leaving a 1" margin around edges. Spread 1/4 cup chocolate over each (reserve remaining chocolate); sprinkle with the raisin mixture and cinnamon-sugar mixture. Press raisins and filling into dough. Roll each dough half into a tight jelly roll; press to seal bottom and sides. Gently roll each jelly roll into a 20"-long piece. Fold each in half lengthwise and twist each twice. Place each twisted roll in a prepared pan, seam side down and ends tucked under. Brush tops and sides with the remaining melted butter; sprinkle with two-thirds of the streusel (reserve remaining streusel), gently pressing it in. Let rise in a very warm spot until doubled in volume, about 2 hours.

**4.** Heat oven to 350°. Sprinkle loaves with remaining streusel and bake until golden brown and cooked through, about 45 minutes. Let cool. Drizzle with remaining chocolate and let set.

contrast to many currently modish, fusion-themed desserts, Mrs. London's pastries rely on classic French techniques and recipes even as they respond to contemporary taste. An excellent example is the abricot d'azur, a puff pastry tart filled with apricot halves set in chiboust, a caramelized and pastis-flavored pastry cream. Michael London's passion for classic French pastry doesn't keep him from experimenting with Austrian, German, Italian, and eastern European baking traditions: his customers can savor cannoli, strudels, and an extraordinary chocolate babka shot through with dark chocolate and rum-soaked raisins, as well as European specialties not often encountered in the United States, such as kugelhopf, an Alsatian cake, and pressburger, an all but forgotten Austrian sweet made of yeast dough, poppy seeds, and cream or an ambrosial mixture of walnuts, orange, and honey. "If you like something, try it" is London's motto. "I always say to my customers that we make everything as best we can and that they should try whatever catches their eye." Classical predilections notwithstanding, he insists that there are no set rules for what may and may not appear in his shop (an ethic he says dates to his "crazy hippie" days).

And then there are the almond croissants, which could be said to embody London's perfectionism more than any of his other creations. Split lengthwise, they are brushed with rum syrup and filled with almond cream. Then the halves are put back together, spread with more almond cream, and topped with a sprinkling of sliced almonds before

**Michael London and his wife, Wendy, below. Facing page, Mrs. London's ever popular—and fantastically airy—chocolate babka.**









## SARATOGA BAKER

being baked to a toasted finish. The syrup and cream are alluring embellishments, but the magic of the pastry is the croissant itself. Tim Hangarter remembers that London would cut open a croissant from each morning's batch and place it on the workbench to examine its internal structure, in a stark assessment of its triumph or failure.

MICHAEL LONDON, THE SON of a featherweight boxer and a seamstress, wasn't born to the world of food any more than he was born to the world of literature. He grew up in a part of Brooklyn, New York, where street smarts were usually valued over education, yet he was irresistibly drawn to poetry, which soon became his life—his “food”, as he puts it. He went to college and then on to graduate school, in English; that led to his work on *Salmagundi* and a job teaching poetry at Skidmore College in the late 1960s. But London soon realized that something was missing. “I was reading about being in the world,” he says, “but nevertheless felt somewhat estranged and alienated. It was only when I started to work with my hands that I felt a part of, rather than apart from, it.” He gave up teaching and returned to New York City to learn how to bake. No matter where London went during his apprenticeships in New York, seasoned bakers tried to discourage him. Given his intelligence, they asked, why would he choose the early mornings and long hours and backbreaking work? But London couldn't be swayed, and by 1973, while working downtown at the Ananda East Bakery, he was making the first croissants ever sold at the original Balducci's, as well as the coveted muffins featured at Bloomingdale's 40 Carrots café.

Despite his successes, London and his wife, whom he'd met at his first bakery job, began to tire of city life. From his years at Skidmore, he knew that Saratoga Springs needed a bakery as good as its summer ballet and its racetrack. So, in 1977 he and Wendy opened the original Mrs. London's on a side street in town, inaugurating an upstate baking legacy that has—in a twisting itinerary typical of someone beholden to his passions—taken several turns before yielding the current shop. No sooner had they cemented their reputation, having attracted a loyal clientele that included George Balanchine and members of the New York City Ballet company, than they closed the first Mrs. London's in 1985 to focus on baking breads in their farmhouse kitchen, with the aim of making the crusty, naturally leavened farm breads typical of the European countryside. The business that evolved from this move, the Rock Hill Bakehouse, was a pioneer in the artisanal baking movement in the United States; it delivered bread to such New York City restaurants as Aureole, Lespinasse, Lutèce, and Le Bernardin.

For London, bread baking allowed for meditation even as it demanded a relentless attentiveness. The ex-hippie was even moved to coin a mantra-like saying or two. “The bread is the guru,” he'd say to his fellow bakers. Or “The earth reveals itself in your hands.” Baking was no longer just an occupation for Michael London. It was his way of understanding the world. In a sense, London never left the '60s behind. He still believes that good things come from the earth and that you can find meaning through transforming its gifts with your hands. Mrs. London's may not quite be nirvana, but it comes close.

In 1996, tugged by his restless passions once again, the now seasoned baker traveled to Paris to reacquire himself with pastry making. After apprenticing at Pâtisserie Gérard Mulot and doing a stint at the flagship Fauchon, the Paris-based purveyor of pastries and luxury edibles, he returned to Saratoga Springs in 1997, and he and Wendy opened the

second incarnation of their bakery, the one I so happily frequent today. It features both the famous pastries and, now, a few hearty breads—a reflection of London's hard-won twin talents: those of an old-world bread baker coupled with those of a master pastry chef.

JUST A FEW MONTHS AGO, the old-world bread baker part of Michael London inspired him to fire up his farmhouse ovens again. Now that Mrs. London's pastries are mostly in the capable hands of Hangarter, it is a good time for exploration and growth. The business has grown to 25 employees, counting Lena Favaloro and Zeke Vaughn, two longtime bakers, and Hangarter, who seems to have a solid place in the future of Mrs. London's. Hangarter is entrusted with much of the baking and is also developing his own desserts. One of his most striking creations is the pas de deux cake, a delicate tableau of handmade chocolate fans and ladyfingers concealing a feather-light milk chocolate mousse and, in the very center, a caramel mousse.

## BAKING WAS NO LONGER JUST A JOB FOR MICHAEL LONDON; IT WAS HIS WAY OF UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD

Hangarter, who studied at the Culinary Institute of America and worked under pastry chef Gunther Heiland in Atlanta, shares London's preference for such classic French pastries as the gâteau saint-honoré. (A framed chromolithograph of Saint Honoré himself, a seventh-century bishop, holding a scepter and a baker's peel, hangs on the café wall.) And he has not forgotten London's dissection of the croissant; today he makes a pastry shell so crusty and thin you can practically cut your finger on it. It's possible he owes part of his talent to heredity: “I have roots in the kitchen,” he says. “My great-grandfather was a chef traveling with the Vanderbilt and Astor families. While he was working in Newport, Rhode Island, my grandmother was born and was taken to the kitchen to be weighed on the butcher's scale.”

Over the years Hangarter has learned that he shares with London a bedrock principle of baking, embodied in another of London's mantras: “It's all in the handling.” Both men know that recipes won't get you anywhere if you don't feel things, literally. “If it's not in the hand, it's no longer part of what the process is all about,” says London, going on to quote the poet Robert Duncan: “... the tale the hand itself tells in its way of working.” Both London and Hangarter disdain mass production. Hangarter still prefers to fashion his own paper cones for decorating and create his own patterns rather than rely on commercial transfer prints.

If you visit Mrs. London's, you might be lucky enough to catch Michael London behind the counter, and if you do, you might also get a whirlwind lesson in taste as he intersperses lines of Yeats, Roethke, Lowell, and Stevens with his own riffs on butter and flour and the search for the consummate bûche de Noël. Structure, substance, and handcrafting: these are the attributes of the finest poetry and of the finest pastry, too, and London knows both well. True to his aesthetic roots, he insists that Mrs. London's is meant to stand for a sort of poetic ideal, something larger than Michael and Wendy themselves, a place where people can taste traditional pastries made with respect and love, the way they were meant to be. 

THE PANTRY, page 92: A source for a saint-honoré pastry tip, almond flour, and an eight-inch fluted removable-bottom tart ring and information on visiting Mrs. London's and ordering its products.





# SAVEUR COOKS

## *New Year! More Locations!*

SAVEUR magazine invites you to share an evening of delicious classic recipes with friends. Classes are currently offered at select culinary schools throughout the country. Each class registration includes a one-year subscription (nine issues) to SAVEUR, an exclusive recipe booklet, and a SAVEUR gift bag filled with samples and coupons. **Visit [www.saveurcooks.com](http://www.saveurcooks.com) for more details.**

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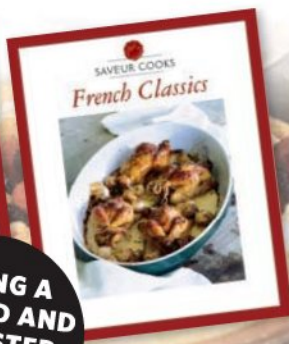
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IN THE SAVEUR

# KITCHEN

Techniques and Discoveries from Our Favorite Room in the House » Edited by Todd Coleman



## The Art of Stirring

**W**E COOK; THEREFORE we stir. Why is it, then, that many of us take that most elemental of techniques for granted—and sometimes forget to practice it altogether, at least with gusto? Could it be because we're too often in a hurry to get our dinners on the table, or perhaps because we're reluctant to make a mess, the

by-product of hearty stirring? Though techniques like sautéing and broiling usually receive our full attention, stirring is frequently overlooked. We ask that you reconsider that forgotten action. Reach in with your spoon or spatula through the steam to push and plow your way into the sizzling contents of your pot. Underneath the splattering and

gurgling you'll find, say, the stubborn parts of your stew—the sugary onions, the searing pieces of meat—that should be scraped up and urged on. Back and forth, and in ever widening circles, get to the bottom of it all. Stirring assiduously as your main ingredient wilts or browns, you dig in and cook, making good things happen. —Todd Coleman



## KITCHEN

# King of Sauces



**A** MERICAN APPETIZER par excellence, the shrimp cocktail is the first thing a lot of us think of when we hear the phrase “hors d’œuvre”. But what, exactly, transforms cooked, chilled shrimp into a cocktail? The answer: the sauce. What most people don’t realize is that the tangy mixture of tableside condiments—usually ketchup, worcestershire sauce, Tabasco sauce, prepared horseradish, and lemon juice—started out as an accompaniment not for shrimp but for oysters, which were once consumed in abundance, much as shrimp are today.

As far as can be discerned from the

scant scholarship on the subject, cocktail sauce as we know it was born in the saloons of gold rush-era San Francisco, where hungry forty-niners mixed their oysters on the half shell with tomato ketchup. It isn’t known precisely when the other ingredients joined the mix, but since most of them were common items on barroom tables at the time, it probably didn’t take long. By the late 1800s, the oyster cocktail—shelled oysters lolling in what ultimately became known as “cocktail sauce”—had become a standard fixture on bar and restaurant menus in the West. Hermann Oelrichs, a Gilded Age businessman who had married the daughter of a Californian mining magnate, eventually brought the recipe to New York City’s Manhattan Club, whence it spread to become a standby in the city’s men’s clubs.

As the 19th century waned, the cocktail gradually became more widely known and more genteel, often served in dainty glassware as the first course at society galas. Along the way, people began to pair the sauce with other protein-rich foods, including crab, lobster, ham, and, of course, shrimp. During the first half of the 20th century, as oyster beds were depleted and—thanks to advances in fishing and refrigeration—shrimp became more widely available, the sauce came to be definitively associated with our country’s best-loved crustacean. —T.C.

## Shrimp Trick

Here’s a foolproof (but little-known) way to devein a raw shrimp without removing its shell or cutting into it. Insert a toothpick between the two middle shell segments. Slide the tip of the toothpick just underneath the vein (which is actually the shrimp’s digestive tube) and lift slowly. Unless it’s broken, the entire vein will emerge in a single piece. Guaranteed. —T.C.



## ONE-MAN DYNASTY

The recipe for stir-fried shrimp with snow peas on page 50 comes from Eddie Schoenfeld, a New York food consultant specializing in Chinese cuisine. We recently talked with him about his culinary passions.

### How did you get interested in Chinese food?

As a Jewish kid growing up in New York, I was exposed to a lot more Chinese food than I was to, say, lobster bisque. It’s my comfort food.

### What was an early moment of inspiration?

When I was young, I used to eat at a restaurant in New York called Shun Lee Dynasty, owned by chef T. T. Wang. Whenever he made dishes that I’d had before, his were sublime, whereas others had tasted pedestrian. That piqued a lot of curiosity in me: What was it that this guy knew?

### How did you go from curious student to aficionado?

I was driving a taxi to support my cooking habit and setting up Chinese banquets for friends in Mandarin- or Shanghai-style restaurants, which in those days simply meant spring rolls instead of egg rolls. In 1969, David Keh [he opened one of the first true Sichuan restaurants in the U.S.] showed up, and we became friends and later started a restaurant called Uncle Tai’s. We got a four-star review in the *New York Times*.

### What are your guiding principles in the kitchen?

I cook to please myself, and [pointing at his belly] I like to eat! —T.C.



## KITCHEN

# SUPER TUBER

The delicately sweet tuber called yuca, which also goes by the name manioc or cassava, is essential to many Peruvian dishes, including the ceviche on page 64, where it serves as an accompaniment. Earthier tasting than a potato and rich in starch, this versatile vegetable is sometimes misunderstood outside of Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America—the places where it is most commonly consumed. Its name is often misspelled as *yucca*—which is the moniker of a North American desert plant—but the tuber belongs to any of several varieties of *Manihot esculenta*, a perennial shrub native to the Brazilian Amazon. The plant's long, baseball bat-shaped roots grow in clusters and are covered in a thick, slightly shiny, gnarled brown surface, which, when cut away, reveals a white, firm interior. Boiled or fried, the tuber softens to become creamy and mellow tasting, making it an accommodating vehicle for sharp flavors, such as mojo, a Cuban sauce of bitter seville-orange juice, garlic, and olive oil that's often served atop it. Yuca is added to soups and stews in chunks, as in the many variations on sancocho, a soup from Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela, to flavor and thicken them; grated yuca is processed into a coarse flour used in the desserts of Brazil and a Peruvian fermented drink called masato. Yuca is commonly available at Latin American markets. Look for even-colored tubers with firm skin and no soft or moldy spots. (Note that much of the yuca for sale in the U.S. has been coated with a thin layer of wax, which helps to extend the vegetable's shelf life.) When a good specimen is cut open, it should have dense flesh with no dark blemishes, purple veins, or grayish rings. Pure and gleaming, it should beckon to the eager cook. —*Maricel E. Presilla*



## Belly Up

**M**OST AMERICANS know it in its cured, smoked, and sliced form: bacon. Italians season it, roll it up, and cure it to make pancetta, a key ingredient in spaghetti alla carbonara (see recipe, page 36). The Chinese slow-cook it in dark soy sauce and rock sugar to concoct red-cooked pork (see recipe, page 75). And in recent years it's been a popular cut of meat in many upscale American eateries. It's pork belly, and we're wild about it. Various called side meat, streak of lean, middlin' meat, and, in a case of reverse etymology, fresh bacon, this lusciously fatty slab is one of the pig's most important cuts; it's taken from the animal's underside, below the loin. The front half of the belly is attached to the ribs, which are cut off close to the bone for spareribs (most of the meat is left on the prized belly, which may account for the designation "spare"). Pork belly consists of pinkish meat streaked with wide bands of fat capped with skin. An average piece weighs 12 to 14 pounds, although you can purchase it from your butcher in smaller portions. Succulent whether fresh or cured, pork belly adds big flavor and divine richness to whatever dish it appears in. —*Brigit Binns*





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## KITCHEN

# Chinese Chameleon

**W**HEAT GLUTEN, or mianjin (often called seitan in the United States), is, along with tofu and its many by-products, one of the fundamental ingredients of vegetarian cooking in China. Though it comes in many consistencies and shapes (including a dense and chewy kind that's shaped like a chubby cigar), I'm particularly enamored of the porous variety known in Shanghaiese as kaufu (also commonly spelled *kaofu*)—the main component of the red-cooked dish *si xi kaufu*, or four happiness wheat gluten (see recipe, page 72). Most often resembling tan, spongy bread (and cut into two-inch cubes), kaufu is delicate in texture and high in protein. It has a distinctively yeasty, almost mushroom-like taste, but it's a culinary chameleon, adapting harmoniously to whatever flavors it's cooked with.



Kaufu is made when flour, yeast, water, and salt are kneaded into a dough, which is then left to rise. The dough is kneaded again under a continuous stream of tepid water for roughly 15 minutes; the water rinses away most of the starch. The substance that remains is almost exclusively gluten, a matrix of proteins that holds wheat-flour dough together and gives it its elasticity. It's then steamed and, sometimes, dried. In China, some tradition-abiding cooks still make their own kaufu, but most people these days buy it already made. In the United States, it is generally found at Chinese markets frozen in plastic-wrapped packages, which are labeled, somewhat confusingly, as "wheat dough". However you find it, though, kaufu will be a ready foil for the flavors of your cooking. —Grace Young

## METHOD

### Ed Koch's Broiled Swordfish with Olives

Former mayor Ed Koch, whose New York City kitchen is featured on page 26, cooks for himself at least two nights a week. This is one of his favorite main courses. Arrange an oven rack 4" from the broiler element and heat the broiler. Place one 1-lb. swordfish steak (about 1" thick) in a small oval heatproof casserole dish. Rub the swordfish steak all over with 2 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil and season both sides to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Arrange 8 large pitted green olives (such as cerignola) around the swordfish. Place the dish under the broiler and broil until the swordfish is lightly browned and just cooked through and the olives have become a burnished brown, 8-10 minutes. Using a spatula, transfer the swordfish and olives to a plate. Enjoy with a glass of chilled grape juice, if you like. Serves 1.





## KITCHEN

RECIPES & METHODS  
BY CATEGORY

## APPETIZERS AND HORS D'OEUVRES

|                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Beet and Sumac Salad.....           | 24 |
| Myanmar-Style Long Bean Salad ..... | 34 |
| Shrimp Cocktail.....                | 52 |

## SOUPS AND STEWS

|                            |    |
|----------------------------|----|
| Maine Shrimp Chowder ..... | 55 |
|----------------------------|----|

## MAIN DISHES

## Meat and Poultry

|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Red-Cooked Chicken .....       | 75 |
| Red-Cooked Pork Belly .....    | 75 |
| Spaghetti alla Carbonara ..... | 36 |

## Seafood

|                                                            |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Barbecued Shrimp .....                                     | 44 |
| Ed Koch's Broiled Swordfish with Olives .....              | 90 |
| Grouper Ceviche.....                                       | 64 |
| Huanchaco-Style Fish Stewed in Tomatoes<br>and Chiles..... | 60 |
| Red-Cooked Fish.....                                       | 72 |
| Shrimp Boil .....                                          | 49 |
| Maine Shrimp Chowder .....                                 | 55 |
| Stir-Fried Shrimp with Snow Peas .....                     | 50 |

## Vegetarian

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Four Happiness Wheat Gluten ..... | 72 |
|-----------------------------------|----|

## SIDE DISHES

|                                       |    |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Beet and Sumac Salad.....             | 24 |
| Boiled Yuca.....                      | 58 |
| Myanmar-Style Long Bean Salad .....   | 34 |
| Chickpea Porridge with Chile Oil..... | 67 |

## DRINKS

|                                            |    |
|--------------------------------------------|----|
| Cumin-Laced Tamarind and Mint Cooler ..... | 20 |
|--------------------------------------------|----|

## DESSERTS

|                           |    |
|---------------------------|----|
| Gâteau Saint-Honoré.....  | 78 |
| Lemon Meringue Tart ..... | 81 |
| Chocolate Babka.....      | 82 |

## MISCELLANEOUS

|                                            |    |
|--------------------------------------------|----|
| Andean Yellow Chile and Epazote Salsa..... | 65 |
|--------------------------------------------|----|

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# THE PANTRY

## A Guide to Resources

*In producing the stories for this issue,  
we discovered food products and  
kitchenware too good to keep to ourselves.  
Please feel free to raid our pantry!*

BY LIZ PEARSON

### Fare

To make the cumin-laced tamarind and mint cooler, buy **tamarind pulp** (\$4.99 for a 1-pound block), **black salt** (\$4.99 for a 4-ounce package; ask for "kala namak"), and **garam masala** (\$4.49 for a 4-ounce package) from Kalustyan's (800/352-3451; www.kalustyans.com). Ground **sansho peppers** (\$10.99 for a 12-gram jar; ask for "sansyo" peppers), readily available in the U.S., are also sold at Kalustyan's, as well as the ground **sumac** (\$2.99 for a 2-ounce package) you'll need to make the beet and sumac salad.

### List

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Shine Trading Company California Yellow Star Thistle, the Wild Bee (336/605-9713; www.thewildbee.com) for Mountainhoney Blue Borage, the Savannah Bee Company (912/234-0688; www.savannahbee.com) for the Savannah Bee Company Raw Tupelo, and Volcano Island Honey Company (808/775-1000; www.volcanoislandhoney.com) for Rare Hawaiian Organic White Honey.

### Cellar

For **wines** from the volnay producers listed in our tasting notes, contact the following: Henriot Inc. (212/605-6700) for the Domaine Bouchard Père et Fils Clos des Chênes; North Berkeley Imports (800/266-6585) for the Domaine de la Pousse d'Or Clos de la Bousse d'Or; Martin Scott Wines (516/327-0808) for the Domaine de Montille Les Taillepieds and Domaine Michel Lafarge Clos des Chênes; Classic Wine Imports (781/352-1100) for the Domaine des Comtes Lafon Santenots du Milieu; the Sorting Table (707/603-1460) for the Domaine Jean Boillot Père et Fils Les Caille-rets; Martine's Wines (415/883-0400) for the Domaine Leroy Santenots-du-Milieu; Diageo North America (646/223-2000) for the Domaine Marquis d'Angerville Clos des Ducs; Dreyfus Ashby (212/818-0770) for the Joseph Drouhin Clos des Chênes; Kobrand (212/692-4679) for the Maison Louis Jadot Clos des Chênes; and Wilson-Daniels (800/963-5902) for the Morey-Blanc Santenots.

### Memories

To make the Myanmar-style long bean salad, buy Chinese **long beans** (prices vary) from Melissa's/World Variety Produce (800/588-0151) and **fish sauce** (\$4.99 for a 200-ml bottle) from Kalustyan's (800/352-3451; www.kalustyans.com).

### Shrimp

To order excellent **shrimp**, contact the following companies for pricing and shipping details: Four Winds Seafood (504/228-8038; www.fourwindsseafood.com) for Ray Brandhurst's white and brown shrimp catch, Wild Ocean Seafood

Market (866/945-3623; www.wildoceanmarket.com) for head-on, shell-on rock shrimp, Bama Sea Products (727/327-3474; www.bamasea.com) for Gulf of Mexico/Key West pink shrimp, Gulf of Mexico/Texas brown shrimp, and Gulf of Mexico white shrimp, Harbor Fish Market (207/775-0251; www.harborfish.com) for Northern Pink/Maine shrimp, Hallmark Fisheries (541/888-3253; www.hallmarkfisheries.com) for Pacific pink shrimp, and Mutual Fish Company (206/322-4368; www.mutualfish.com) for California spot prawns. Buy Zatarain's crab and **shrimp boil** (\$1.25 for a 3-ounce box) from Zatarain's (888/264-5460; www.zatarains.com) to make the shrimp boil.

### Peru

Melissa's/World Variety Produce (800/588-0151) sells fresh **epazote** (prices vary) to make the Andean yellow chile and epazote salsa. To make the chickpea porridge with chile oil, order whole dried **aji mirasol chiles** (\$5.10 for a 2-ounce package) from Kitchen/Market (888/468-4433; www.kitchenmarket.com).

### Red Cooking

Adriana's Caravan (800/316-0820; www.adrianascaravan.com) sells the Chinese **rice wine** (\$5.95 for a 25.3-ounce bottle) you'll need for making the red-cooked fish, four happiness wheat gluten, red-cooked pork belly, and red-cooked chicken. It also sells dried **wood ear mushrooms** (\$3.00 for a 1-ounce bag) and dried Chinese **black mushrooms** (\$3.25 for a 1-ounce bag) for making the four happiness wheat gluten, dried **citrus peel** (\$2.95 for a 4-ounce bag) and Chinese **rock sugar** (\$2.95 for a 14-ounce package) for making the red-cooked chicken, and mushroom-flavored dark **soy sauce** (\$3.95 for a 21-ounce bottle) for making the red-cooked pork belly and red-cooked chicken.

### Saratoga Baker

Stop by Mrs. London's for a sweet bite (464 Broadway, Saratoga Springs, New York; 518/581-1652; www.mrs.londons.com), or order a limited offering of the bakery's goodies via mail order. Purchase a saint-honoré **pastry tip** (\$1.60; ask for tip #880) from Beach Cuisine (760/943-9491) to make the gâteau saint-honoré and the lemon meringue tart, as well as the eight-inch fluted removable bottom **tart ring** (\$7.95 each) you'll need to make the lemon meringue tart. King Arthur Flour (800/827-6836; www.kingarthurfour.com) sells **almond flour** (\$6.95 for an 8-ounce bag) for making the same dessert.

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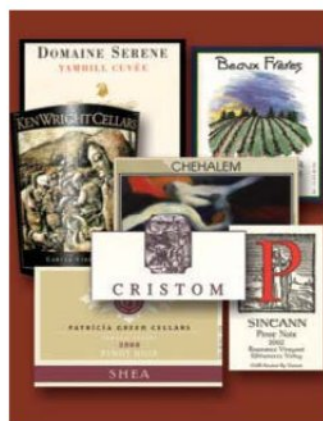
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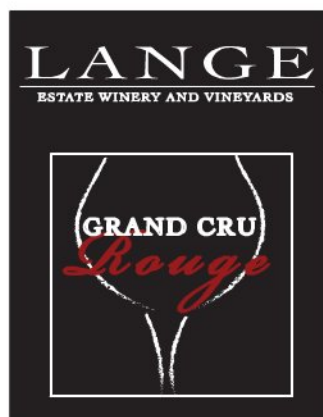
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